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Christ & His Mother
In Italian Art

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Lemercier graveur — Printed in Paris

Madonna del Gran Duca

Raphael

Christ & His Mother

In Italian Art

EDITED BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

ROBERT EYTON
CANON OF WESTMINSTER

LONDON
BLISS, SANDS & CO.
MDCCCXCVII

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Introduction

A WORK like this is founded on the assumption that art has something to teach us about the life of Christ and His Mother—some aspects of the Incarnation to reveal—which cannot be conveyed by means of words or symbols. This assumption at once gives the artist his true place: through him, if he is true to his inspirations, a distinct revelation is made to the human soul—a revelation of certain sides of the Divine Mysteries which can be made in no other fashion. So that a work of this kind is a real contribution to the religious forces that are influencing us. I am quite aware that from this view there would be much dissent, chiefly proceeding from those whose view of the function of art is limited to the fact that it ministers to the gratification of the senses or, at most, that it assists the imagination by representing to dull minds that which words cannot convey. But there are considerations founded on our own self-consciousness which, I venture to think, prove that this view of the question is altogether false and unsatisfying. On these I would dwell first:

1. The sense of beauty, the admiration and desire for what is beautiful in the largest sense, is implanted in man. No doubt the quantity and quality of this sense vary indefinitely. But, somehow or other, in some shape or other, every one has a sense that certain things are beautiful, and a corresponding desire for them or a longing for their presence. Just as the other perceptions—the sense of truth, or the sense of utility, or the sense of order—vary in strength and scope in individuals, so does the sense of beauty. It ranges from the rough and coarse ideals of the savage to the highest and most refined appreciations of artistic genius; but all through there is the longing for beauty and the delight in its realisation. It varies, too, not only in different men and in men of different times, but in the same men at different times of their lives; but while its charm lasts, it is imperious in its demands; it stills and satisfies the soul as nothing else does. Whether it be awakened by music, art, or nature, it is equally impressive for the time; it swallows up everything else; it lifts man into another world. This sense of beauty is implanted, within us, in the germ, by God—it is part of our human outfit; it is His messenger, whether it wakes up within us at the sight of sea and mountain, dawn and stars, at the bidding of the succession and harmony of sounds, at the recounting of noble deeds or the survey of great characters, or even,

strange to say, at the portraiture of deep suffering nobly borne, of wasting disease, of pain and tears—for sorrow has a beauty of its own as well as brightness and strength, and completeness of form.

There is, then, this mysterious and primary quality of beauty in things which at first sight seem so different, and we can detect it with an inward eye, with a sense that is not bodily but completely spiritual. God has given us this sense and the desire which it awakens ; and He has provided for its satisfaction beauty as an inward element in the things that He has made ; in the lilies of the field ; in the glories of sunrise and sunset ; in the rippling waves and the clear blue lake ; in the stars ; in the sparkling gem ; in the roar of the diapason ; in the clang of the trumpet ; in the sweet, soft voices of harp, flute, and strings. And He has also given to the painter the power to create beauty—to create what He Himself has made—beauty of another kind to that which has been seen before ; beauty of form and beauty of colour ; beauty over which time has no power—which remains in our great galleries, and exercises its spell from generation to generation. The great painters have left these creations in the world, which endure, not as mere spectacles, but as lifting and moulding forces. As we look on the work of their hands we feel that there can be no question raised either about the satisfaction which God has provided for the implanted sense of beauty within man, or about their lasting influence.

" They are in truth the substance, we the shadows." And those who meet and satisfy in any degree the longing for the beautiful in man, above all those who raise his ideals and elevate his conceptions have a right, an undoubted right, to be accounted along with great poets and musicians as " fellow-workers with God,"—trusted with a ministry—endowed with a special χάρισμα, a gift of grace.

2. This is our contention then in the face of those who would limit the function of art to merely sensuous gratification. But I go further than this and contend that art has had a great mission in reference to the Incarnation. It has helped men to realise what is in itself so unthinkable, that God Who made heaven and earth entered into these familiar conditions of time and space and came into the world the Child of a human mother. Those are amazing words : " When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." But the painter has filled them with an interpretation which is always appealing to us in some Madonna and Child, and has made their meaning live and thrill, even for us now, who are so familiar with them.

At certain epochs this kind of influence spread far more widely. It would not be too much to say that the realisation of Christ's real Manhood for the masses of men in the middle ages was effected by art. The early theological controversies about the Incarnation had left Him but a dim shadowy figure, a Being non-natural, out of touch with man's ordinary life. Scholastic subtleties would have completed the dimming process if it had not been for the inspiration of art. Of course art too had its limitations ; it was often used then for purely doctrinal and emotional purposes. It was used to produce what was exquisitely simple and natural, like the frescoes in the Arena Chapel, which brought Christ and His life home to the hearts of homely men ; but it was used also to enforce doctrine, to expand in an unhealthy and coarse detail the idea

of judgment, the terrors of Divinity, as in the Campo Santo at Pisa ; it was used, too, to portray the Passion of Christ in an exclusive fashion, to heighten the idea of His physical sufferings, to represent them in a realistic fashion which robbed them of all awe and sublimity and caused them to appeal to man's pity and compassion, not to his reverence and deepened feelings.

The effect of this limited point of view would have been to extinguish the idea of a pure and natural Manhood, to make Him only a subject for exciting one set of feelings, and to obscure all the rest. The corrective of all this limitation in idea was found in the fascination which the painting of the Madonna and Child exercised on the greatest masters.

The humanisation of Christ has always seemed to have been effected for the masses by the portrayal of that which is the most moving of all spectacles, wherever seen on this earth—the child in its mother's arms. It would not be too much to say that these pictures have acted as a corrective of those theological disputations about Christ, which have made men think of Him as though He were an idea or a doctrine, and not a living, loving Man. The thing that draws Him closest to us, and ourselves to Him, at all times, is that He had a mother, and that His mother was to Him what only a mother can be ; and this idea the "endless" Madonnas have put into a shape and have given to it a concreteness which makes forgetfulness or obscuration of His real Manhood impossible. They have taught the deepest truth about Christ in a wordless language that comes home to every one ; and that by portraying the deepest and truest relation that is connected with our common life. Our theological disputes have often caused earnest and devout souls to cry out for the living Christ, to lament with Mary, "They have taken away our Lord, and we know not where they have laid Him." The Christ who blessed the little children and claimed them for His own and for His kingdom seems to have disappeared from among us in a cloud of disputes and dogmatisms ; we feel that we want less controversy and a more quiet realisation of the real sublimity that surrounds all that is meant by "the Mother and the Son."

Of course there are many other points of view in reference to the life of Our Lord, besides this one, as to which art has given us new conceptions. But its special function seems to have been to teach us most completely the deepest lessons. And it has done this when it has represented the common human life filled with the Divine—has taken every-day life and represented it ideally and with sublimity—has lifted the prosaic into the poetic and made us feel a sense of the greatness of the smallest things. The painters who have done this—who have been able to combine a sense of Divine Majesty and human friendliness, of Power from on high and every-day working life—remain the great teachers of those who have eyes to see. They have left, in their pictures of Christ, the sense of suggestiveness, the feeling that there was more to know. While they have seemed to separate Him from the race as a King, they have bound Him to the race as a Brother, they have made us feel at once His nearness and His exceeding far-offness. While modern realism has put its withering hand on His Person and Life and tried to strip it of mystery—to treat it with unhappy and unblessed familiarity, to vulgarise the scenes of the Gospel by introducing the tawdriness and the vulgarity of modern fashions, or has sacrificed moral sublimity to a hateful sentimentalism—their creations remain as a perpetual protest.

The purpose and effort of this work is to follow humbly in the same direction. It is meant

to bring before us some of the greatest and most elevating conceptions of Christ, and in particular to emphasise that which brings Him so near to us, His acceptance of the relationship of the Son of Mary, and all the tender home feeling which it at once involves and sanctifies.

We follow the gradual development of this idea, from the first beginnings of Italian painting, in the early years of the fourteenth century, to the days of the full Renaissance, when Christian art reached its highest beauty and perfection in the works of Giovanni Bellini and Titian, of Raphael and Leonardo. We see the Virgin and Child in a thousand different forms ; sometimes alone, sometimes attended by S. Joseph and the infant Baptist, sometimes by S. Anne and S. Elizabeth or other saints. We see the Mother nursing her Babe or kneeling in devout adoration at His cradle, we see her resting in fair meadows or enthroned under marble porticoes, we see her again appearing in glorified visions surrounded by angel hosts and seated on the clouds of heaven. And we see her, too, taking part in the different scenes of her Son's life on earth, sharing in His joys and in His sorrows, at the marriage-feast of Cana, and by the Cross of Calvary. As a rule, the Madonna is always present in the successive scenes from the Passion and Death of Christ, and in His Ascension into Heaven, while she is occasionally introduced by Fra Angelico and a few other painters in the Transfiguration and Resurrection.

The fifty examples here selected are, as far as possible, representative of the chief schools of Italian art, from the days of Giotto to those of Michelangelo. Both Raphael's small Madonna at Panshanger, and the cartoon of the "Virgin and S. Anne," by Leonardo, at Burlington House, have been especially reproduced for this work, by the kind permission of Lord Cowper and of the President and Council of the Royal Academy.

ROBERT EYTON.

Biographical Notices

GIOTTO

1276–1337

IN a village of Etruria," writes Lorenzo Ghiberti, the earliest historian of the Florentine Renaissance, "Painting took her rise." In other words Giotto di Bondone was born in the year 1276, at the little village of Colle, in the Val Mugello, and commune of Vespignano, fourteen miles from Florence. There the great master, named after his grandfather, Angiolo, and known by the diminutive, Angiolotto-Giotto, kept his father's flocks on the Apennine slopes, until Cimabue, riding one day over the hills, found him drawing his sheep with a coal on a slab of stone. This illustrious personage, struck by the boy's talent, obtained his peasant-father, Bondone's leave to take his son back to Florence, and thus at ten years of age, Giotto was taken straight from the sheep-folds to study painting in the shop of the first master of the day.

Such is the tale, told alike by Ghiberti and Vasari, and confirmed by Leonardo da Vinci, who remarks that "Giotto, being born in the mountains, and having no guide but Nature in his art, began by drawing on the rocks the movements of the goats which he kept." The stories which ran through Florence of the young painter's marvellous skill, of the O which he drew with a single sweep of his pen, of the fly which Cimabue tried to brush off his picture, or of the thirsty look on the face of the man stooping to drink at the well, are proofs of the wonder and admiration excited among his contemporaries by his first attempts to imitate Nature more closely. The boldness and originality of his genius soon led him to discard the purely conventional art then in practice, and to adopt new types and colouring, as well as to introduce natural incidents and expression into his compositions. At the same time there can be no doubt that the young artist's style was partly formed by the study of antique models, and that his conceptions were largely influenced by the example of Giovanni Pisano, the great sculptor of the façade of Orvieto, and of the pulpits of Pisa and Pistoja.

Giotto's first important frescoes were painted in the ancient Badia of Florence, and the fame which he thus acquired brought him an invitation to Assisi from Fra Muro, Vicar-General of the Franciscan Order, between the years 1296 and 1302. Here, in the famous sanctuary which had

arisen over the tomb of the great Saint, whose memory was still fresh in the hearts of the people, Giotto painted his four allegories of the monastic Virtues on the vaulted roof of the Lower Church. OBEDIENCE, POVERTY, and CHASTITY, were the three fair maidens whom, according to the legend, S. Francis met on the road to Siena, and who represented the graces which he held up to his followers as the sum of evangelical perfection. Nowhere is Giotto's life-giving power more finely displayed than in these works, where he has managed to animate the frigid conceits of mediæval allegory with human warmth and reality. And especially interesting for the sake of its connection with Dante is the scene in which S. Francis, the "glorioso poverell' di Dio," is represented as wedding his holy bride, Poverty. The nuptials take place as described in the "Divina Commedia," before the whole court of Heaven. Love and Hope are the bridesmaids, Christ himself the priest, who blesses the wedded pair. The bride's robe is torn and ragged, the children throw stones, and the dogs bark at her, but the thorns blossom into roses about her brow, and the face of Francis glows with love and rapture. A practical illustration of the story is seen on the left of the picture, where a young man led by an angel gives his cloak to a beggar, while on the other side, a richly clad youth with a falcon on his wrist, turns scornfully away, and a miser clutches his bags of gold more tightly in his grasp. All these frescoes are painted in the clear pale colour which Giotto used from the first, and which enabled him to attain striking effects, in spite of his ignorance of light and shade. At the same time he substituted an oval type of countenance with almond-shaped eyes, for the round faces and staring eyes until then in general use. His drapery hangs in simple and natural folds, the action is real and life-like, and there is some attempt at foreshortening, while the grouping of the figures and individual expression of the heads reveal a marked advance upon all that had gone before. According to Ghiberti, Giotto adorned nearly the whole of the Lower Church with paintings, and traces of his hand may be found in several of the scenes from the life of Christ which are still to be seen in the right-hand transept, but all these have been much damaged by damp and restoration, and it is difficult to determine his exact share in the work. The series was probably finished by some of his followers, who worked in the great church which, long after Giotto's death, remained the home and centre of Tuscan art.

Before Giotto's labours at Assisi were ended, he was summoned to Rome by Pope Boniface VIII., and here, in 1298, he designed the mosaic of the Navicella, which is still to be seen in the portico of S. Peter's. The tempera altar-piece which he painted according to Ghiberti in the old basilica has long perished, and the only remaining traces of his presence in the Eternal City are to be seen in three interesting panels, representing the martyrdom of S. Peter and S. Paul, and the Pope's nephew, Cardinal Stefaneschi, kneeling before Christ, which are still preserved in the Canons' Sacristy at S. Peter's, and a damaged fresco of Pope Boniface proclaiming the Jubilee, on a pillar in S. John Lateran. This last work proves that Giotto was still in Rome in 1300, when Dante came there among the vast concourse of pilgrims. The poet of the Vita Nuova, who places his great vision of heaven and earth in that memorable year, was an intimate friend of Giotto, and on his return to Florence, the painter introduced Dante's portrait in an altar-piece which he executed for the chapel of the Podestà palace. This portrait was probably copied in the frescoes

that were discovered upon the chapel walls fifty years ago, and were at one time ascribed to Giotto, although they must have been painted by one of his followers, after the fire which destroyed the building in 1332.

In 1303, Enrico Scrovegno, a citizen of Padua, built a chapel dedicated to the Virgin on the site of an old Roman amphitheatre, and invited Giotto to adorn its walls. Three years later Dante visited Padua during his exile, and spent some time in the house of Giotto, who was living there with his wife, Madonna Ciuta of the parish of S. Reparata of Florence, and their young children. The painter was then exactly thirty, and is described by Benvenuto da Imola, an early commentator of Dante, as *adhuc satis juvenis.* "The whole of the Arena Chapel," writes Ghiberti, "was painted by Giotto," and, if we except the frescoes in the choir that were added later, his statement is correct. A fresco of Christ in glory occupies the space above the arch leading into the sanctuary. On the entrance wall is the Last Judgment, and along the side walls are three rows of subjects, divided by ornamental borders in imitation of mosaic-work, representing thirty-eight scenes from the life of the Virgin and her Son. Below are allegorical figures of the Virtues and Vices, in chiaroscuro, illustrating the progress of man from earth to heaven. Each virtue is contrasted with the opposite vice, and the series ends with Hope, who, standing on the threshold of Paradise, springs forward to reach a crown held out by angel hands, while Despair, the blackest of all crimes, is dragged down by devils to her place among the lost.

Here, in a series of undoubted genuineness and comparatively good preservation, we are able to form some idea of Giotto's marvellous powers. We see how completely he realises the significance of the tale he has to tell, and how wonderfully he succeeds in communicating its meaning to the spectator, in spite of the evident limitations of his art. Each line is charged with purpose; the types which he selects, the grouping and gestures of his figures, all help to set forth his intention. His splendid dramatic powers are fully revealed in the historic subjects leading up, as they do, from the legends of the Virgin's birth to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. There are scenes which in point of composition have never been surpassed, such, for instance, as the "Resurrection of Lazarus" or the "Entombment," while few later painters have equalled the beautiful expression of sympathy in the face of S. Elizabeth as she hails the Mother of the Lord, or the passion of adoring love, in the outstretched arms and yearning eyes of the Magdalen, kneeling at the feet of the risen Christ. Again, slight and elementary as was his knowledge of anatomy, he contrives to give a wonderful sense of life and movement to the elect, whom he shows as rising from the last sleep or to the form of the ascending Christ, as he returns to his Father's throne. Here and there we find some of the homely incidents which Giotto did not shrink from introducing in the most solemn scenes—the maid-servant spinning in the room where S. Anne kneels at her prayers, the fat man tossing off his cup of wine at the marriage feast, or the dog that barks at Joachim as he returns, plunged in thought, to his hut in the wilderness. And although the type of countenance which he adopts is of a decidedly massive and heavy cast, some of the women in the marriage procession of the Virgin and many of the single figures of the Virtues are full of grace and charm. We feel that beauty has returned to earth, and lives once more in these youthful forms.

The other frescoes which Giotto painted at Verona and Ferrara, at Lucca, Ravenna, and

Naples, have all perished, and the only other series now in existence is to be found in the Franciscan church of Santa Croce in Florence, where no less than five chapels were decorated by his hand. Three of these have been covered with modern paintings, but the coat of whitewash which concealed Giotto's frescoes in the other two, has been of late years removed, and a noble series of frescoes, painted in all probability in the last decade of his life, has been once more brought to light. The Peruzzi chapel contains scenes from the life of S. John the Baptist and S. John the Evangelist which, for grandeur of composition, energy of movement, and beauty and variety of expression, surpass all Giotto's earlier works. The figures are larger and better drawn, the draperies are treated with greater breadth and freedom, and in the few portions of the surface which have not been utterly destroyed, we trace a marked advance in gradation of colour. The movement of the angel who appears to Zacharias, and the action of the musician playing the viol as he watches Salome dancing before Herod, are both admirably given, while the expression of curiosity and surprise on the faces of the disciples assembled round S. John's empty grave, is rendered with dramatic vividness. The series of the life of S. Francis in the Bardi chapel has been still more grievously injured, but enough remains to show us the widespread influence which Giotto's conceptions exerted on future generations of artists, and the "Death of the Saint" is a singularly noble and impressive picture. We have only to compare this pathetic scene with Ghirlandajo's fresco of the same subject in the Trinità to realise the immense superiority of Giotto's genius.

Unfortunately, nearly all the panel pictures which excited the admiration of his contemporaries—the "Madonna," which Petrarch left as his most precious possession to his friend, Francesco di Carrara, the portraits of Dante's host, "Can Grande," and that "Death of the Virgin" upon which Michelangelo loved to gaze—have vanished. Of the few that remain, the most important are the large "Madonna," formerly in the church of Ognissanti, which now hangs side by side with that of "Cimabue" in the Academy, a living proof, as it were, of the truth of Dante's famous lines, "Credette Cimabue nella pittura tener lo campo, ed ora ha Giotto il grido," and the picture of S. Francis receiving the Stigmata, in the Louvre. This precious work, with its charming predella of S. Francis preaching to the birds, and supporting the falling pillars of the Lateran, was originally painted for the convent church of S. Francesco of Pisa, and is signed *Opus Jocti Florentini.* This inscription proves the truth of Boccaccio's statement that Giotto always refused to assume the name of Magister, and it is worthy of notice that the master invariably used the signature *Gioctus Pictor* in legal documents that are still in existence.

The deep impression which Giotto's powerful personality left upon his contemporaries is recorded not only by Vasari, but by Petrarch, Sacchetti, and other writers, who with one voice bear witness to the great master's genial temper and ready wit. Boccaccio has left us an amusing picture of the famous painter, trotting along the road to Mugello one rainy day on a tired nag, accompanied by the learned advocate, Messer Forese, both of them wrapt up in old cloaks and hats borrowed from the peasants, and bespattered with mud from head to foot. "Well, Giotto," said the lawyer, "could a stranger who met you to-day ever suppose that you were the first painter in Florence?" "Certainly," was Giotto's prompt reply, "if beholding your worship, he could for a moment imagine that you had learned your A B C." We have a more serious

instance of Giotto's powers of satire in his *canzone* on the subject, Voluntary Poverty, a virtue which had no merit in his eyes, and his denunciation of the hypocrisy that often lurked under the cloak of monastic perfection, is curious as coming from the man who was the favourite painter of the whole Franciscan Order.

In 1329, Giotto went to Naples, on the invitation of King Robert, and painted two series of frescoes, the one which is mentioned by Petrarch in the royal chapel of the Castello Nuovo, the other, in the Franciscan Convent of Santa Chiara, on subjects from the Apocalypse, conceived, we are told, in the spirit of the divine Poet, "*col pensiero di Dante.*" Soon after his return to Florence, in 1334, he was appointed Capo-maestro of the Duomo works, and prepared designs for the beautiful Campanile that was completed after his death. In 1334, he was sent to Milan by the Signoria, to work for their ally, Azzo Visconti, and painted another series of frescoes in the ducal palace, which have also perished, but which Vasari describes as being of "admirable beauty." Late in 1336, he returned to Florence, to watch over the building of his bell-tower and carve the reliefs which adorn the base, "being highly skilled," Ghiberti tells us, "in both arts." In the midst of these labours, his glorious life was brought to a premature close by a sudden death, on the 8th of January, 1337. He was buried with great honour in the Cathedral, and more than a hundred years later, Lorenzo de' Medici placed a bust, carved by Benedetto da Maiano, upon his tomb, while a Latin epitaph composed by Poliziano, gave proud utterance to the popular veneration that was felt for the great master whose genius had brought dead Painting once more to life.

FRA ANGELICO

1387–1455

THE place that Fra Angelico holds in art-history is altogether unique. In him we see the perfect type of the Christian painter, the saint whose holy life was reflected in his work and whose simple child-like faith supplied the inspiration of his art. All that was purest and best in the mediæval world found expression in his paintings—the passionate love of God and man that beat in the heart of Francis, the yearnings of Dante's soul after a higher and more perfect order, the dreams of the monks who in those troubled days sang of the celestial country. And Vasari's glowing language shows how profound was the impression which the angelic painter's life and art had made upon the age, and how fondly his memory still lingered in the heart of Florence.

"This truly Angelic Father," he writes, "spent his whole life in the service of God and of his fellow creatures. He was a man of simple habits, and saintly in all his ways. He kept his heart pure from all worldliness, and was so good a friend to the poor, that I think his soul must be already in heaven. He worked continually at his art, but never painted any excepting sacred pictures. He might have become rich, but he never cared for money, and used to say that true wealth consists in being content with little. He might have enjoyed high dignities, both in his convent and in the world, but he did not value these things, and he had no wish but to escape hell and gain paradise. He might have ruled over many, but would not, saying that it was easier and safer to obey than to command. He was very gentle and chaste, and kept himself free from earthly ties, saying that he who would practise painting has need of quiet and should be without worldly cares and anxieties, and that he who would do the work of Christ must live continually with Him. He was never known to be impatient with the brothers —a thing to me almost incredible!—and when people asked him for a picture, replied, that if the Prior approved, he would not fail to satisfy their wishes. And the saints which he painted are more like saints in face and expression, than those of any other master. He never corrected or retouched his works, but left them as he had first painted them, saying that such was the will of God. He never took pencil in hand without prayer, and could not paint a Crucifixion without

the tears running down his cheeks. . . . And since it seemed that saints and angels of so divine a beauty could only be painted by the hand of an angel, he was always called Fra Angelico."

His real name was Guido, and he was born in 1387, near Vicchio in Val Mugello, not far from Giotto's home; but when he entered the Dominican convent of Fiesole, in 1408, he became known as Fra Giovanni. The first ten years of his monastic life were spent at Cortona, where the Dominicans of Fiesole took refuge, while the Florentine Republic maintained the claim of the schismatic Pope, Alexander, and where Fra Angelico painted his first works. Most of these perished during the French occupation, but two good altar-pieces—a Madonna and Saints in S. Domenico, and an Annunciation in the Gesù, with a view of Lake Thrasymene as seen from Cortona—are still in existence. In 1418, the community returned to their old home at the foot of the steep hill of Fiesole, and during the next eighteen years, Fra Angelico painted most of the panels for the churches and convents of Florence, which have made his name illustrious. He probably began by painting miniatures in the choir books of the monastery, and afterwards learnt something from his friend the Camaldoli master, Lorenzo Monaco, and more from Masaccio's frescoes in the Carmine, but his art remained eminently subjective and owed little to other influences. In knowledge of light and shade and of the structure of the human frame he remained behind many of his contemporaries, and the representation of rapid movement or violent action was quite beyond his powers. The soul in his pictures is quite alive, the body hardly so. Even here his inborn grace and delicacy saved him from the worst defects, while the refined beauty of his faces and the pure bright colour of his draperies give a rare charm to his creations. But it is, above all, as the first great master of human expression that Angelico claims to be remembered. And it is this truly modern quality which appeals in so peculiar a manner to us all, and which, in spite of defective drawing and ignorance of anatomy, make the Dominican master's works so profoundly interesting and attractive. The depth and sincerity of his own religious emotions, the might of his own hope and love, lent wings to his imagination. It is the intensity of his own love and grief that weeps with Dominic at the foot of the Cross, or gazes with Francis, in unspeakable yearning, on the face of his dying Lord, and his own pure dreams that live again in these enchanted visions of Paradise.

Little of Angelico's work remains at S. Domenico of Fiesole to-day, but the predella of Christ in Glory, now in the National Gallery, and the Coronation of the Virgin in the Louvre, both formerly adorned the convent-church. Another Coronation, perhaps even more beautiful, was painted for S. Maria Nuova of Florence, and is now in the Uffizi. The artist has lavished all his richest ornament and most radiant colour on the bright beings who crowd the court of heaven and stand before the throne, as Mr. Ruskin has said so well, "with the flames on their white foreheads waving brighter as they move, and the sparkles streaming from their purple wings, like the glitter of many suns upon a sounding sea, listening in the pauses of alternate song for the prolonging of the trumpet blast and the answering of psaltery and cymbal throughout the endless deep, and from all the star-shores of heaven." But perhaps the most widely known of all Fra Angelico's angels are the twelve seraphs blowing trumpets and playing viols and cymbals on the wings of the Tabernacle which he finished in 1433, for the Guild of Flax-Merchants.

About the same time he may have painted the thirty-two panels of the life of Christ, which formerly adorned the presses that held the church plate of the Servite monks, and are now in the Academy of Florence. Here the traditional type adopted by Giottesque artists is followed with little variation, but the sweetness of the Virgin's face and the simple directness and tender feeling with which each incident is told, are very fascinating. Another subject which Fra Angelico frequently repeated was the Last Judgment. The example that excited Vasari's admiration was painted for the Camaldoli church of Sta. Maria degli Angeli, and is now in the Academy. Another, still finer in the execution of the details, passed from Cardinal Fesch's gallery into that of Lord Dudley, and is now at Berlin. The horrors of the final scene and torments of the lost were little suited to Fra Angelico's art, but Dante's vision of the happy regions where the blessed dance hand in hand in the flowery meadows of Paradise, has never been more perfectly realised. This is the *Urbs beata*, the heavenly Jerusalem of the mediæval poet's dream, where the leaf never withers and the flowers never fade, where the lost and loved are found again and pure hearts gaze on the unveiled face of God.

In 1436, the convent of S. Marco in Florence was granted to the Dominicans of Fiesole, through the good offices of their powerful friend, Cosimo de' Medici. Both church and monastery were rebuilt by the architect Michelozzo, and decorated by Fra Angelico with frescoes and altar-pieces. In 1869, this convent, hallowed by so many memories, was converted into a national museum, and the pictures which he painted as subjects for the devout contemplation of the brothers are now public property. The chapter-house contains his great "Crucifixion," which, in spite of the injuries which it has suffered and the dull red colour that hides its ultramarine background, remains one of the most solemn and impressive of pictures. Besides the traditional group of the fainting Virgin supported by the Maries and S. John, the patron saints of the city of Florence and of the Medici family and the founders of the chief monastic orders are all introduced. Every phase of grief and devotion is represented here, from the silent passion of love and sorrow in the eyes of Francis, to the wild burst of anguish with which S. Damiano turns away. The cloisters are adorned with smaller frescoes of Dominican saints, and over the door of the Forestiera is a beautiful lunette of Christ, the yellow-haired Stranger, with staff and scrip in his hand, on the way to Emmaus, in converse with the disciples, who, in the garb of Dominican friars, pray him to tarry with them. "Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent."

The corridors and cells once inhabited by the friars, on the upper floor, are decorated with scenes from the life of Christ, sadly damaged in places, but still of rare beauty and interest. All the well-known subjects are given in due course. Here the Angel of the Annunciation bends before the lowly Maid of Nazareth, and the white-robed seraph, pointing heavenwards in the dim light of the Easter morning, tells the Maries that their Lord is risen. Here Magdalen weeps in her despair at the foot of the Cross; here, again, walking among the pines and cypresses of the convent garden, she turns in sudden rapture at the sound of the familiar voice calling her by name. As a rule, the traditional composition is preserved, but with certain variations, prompted by the painter's tender devotion. For instance, in the Scourging and Crowning with thorns, only

the form of Christ and the hands of the soldiers are seen, as if he could not bear to represent the whole of the painful scene. In the "Agony of Gethsemane," Martha and Mary are seen watching and praying, while the disciples slumber. The Virgin, who was the object of S. Dominic's special devotion, figures in almost every subject, and S. Dominic, and occasionally S. Thomas Aquinas and S. Peter Martyr, are introduced in the Passion scenes, devoutly meditating on their Lord's sufferings. The "Sermon on the Mount" and the "Descent into Hades" are of especial interest, and the rush of the spirits in prison to meet their victorious Deliverer is rendered with a power to which Fra Angelico seldom attains. But the whole series is marked by greater freedom and originality than any of his earlier works, and inspired with a fervent devotion such as no painter before or since has ever equalled.

These frescoes in S. Marco must have been completed by 1445, when Pope Eugenius IV. summoned Fra Angelico to Rome, to paint the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in the old Vatican Palace. Unfortunately, this Chapel was pulled down by Pope Paul III., to make room for a new staircase and both these frescoes, and another series which Angelico painted in the Dominican Church of S. Maria sopra Minerva, have perished. According to Vasari, the Pope was anxious to elevate Fra Angelico to the dignity of Archbishop of Florence, but consented at his request to appoint another friar of S. Marco, S. Antonio, to the vacant office. After the death of this pontiff, Angelico accepted a pressing invitation from the Board of the Cathedral Works, to visit Orvieto, and signed a contract by which he agreed to devote the summer months of each succeeding year, to the decoration of the newly erected Chapel of S. Brizio. On the 14th of June, 1447, he arrived at Orvieto, bringing Benozzo Gozzoli to help him in the work, and remained there until the 28th of September, by which time he had finished two of the triangular compartments on the ceiling of the Chapel immediately above the altar. The central form of Christ as the Judge of all, surrounded by angel choirs, is one of his most impressive figures, and the sixteen prophets in the pyramidal group on the left, are full of fire and inspiration. But the painter went back to Rome and the work which he had begun was left unfinished, until Luca Signorelli came to Orvieto fifty years afterwards.

In January, 1450, we find Fra Angelico once more in Florence, acting in the capacity of Prior of S. Marco. In the following year, he went to Prato at the request of the commune of that little town, who had begged him to decorate their church, but was recalled to Rome by Pope Nicholas V. before he had time to begin the work. His last years were spent in Rome, where he painted a series of subjects from the lives of the early martyrs, S. Laurence and S. Stephen, in the chapel that still bears the name of its founder, Pope Nicholas V. These frescoes, which had been covered with whitewash and were only discovered a hundred years ago, are finer in point of composition and modelling than any of Angelico's earlier works, and show that the Dominican master had not failed to profit by the great advance in technical knowledge that had been made during his lifetime. The women and children sitting at the feet of Stephen, the sick and lame receiving alms from Laurence, have all his old grace of line and charm of expression, with a far greater degree of dramatic power. And to-day, as we turn from the Stanze where the Angelic Painter figures among the saints of the Disputa, to visit the modest Chapel of Pope Nicholas, we feel that these

frescoes are not unworthy of a place by the side of Raphael's immortal creations. They were Fra Angelico's last works. He died in 1455, and was buried in the Dominican Church of S. Maria sopra Minerva, where his tomb may still be seen, and a Latin inscription in his honour, which is said to have been composed by Pope Nicholas himself.

Hic jacet ven: Pictor Fr: Jo: de Flor: Ord: Pred:
M.CCCC.LV.
Non mihi sit laudi, quod eram velut alter Apelles
Sed quod lucra tuis omnia, Christe, dabam.
Altera nam terris opera extant, altera cælo;
Urbs me Joannem flos tulit Etruriæ.

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

1406–1469

THE history of Fra Filippo Lippi was at one time the subject of much controversy. On the one hand, there was Vasari's romantic account of the Carmelite friar's adventures, upon which Browning founded his well-known poem. On the other, we had an indignant protest from his modern biographers, who rejected Vasari's scandalous tales as calumnies. But of late years new documents have come to light which go far to justify the Aretine writer, and to prove that his picture of the turbulent friar is in the main correct.

The true version of Fra Filippo's life is a curious and instructive page of history, especially as regards the morals of religious communities in these days. He was born in Florence in 1406, but his mother died at his birth, and his father, a butcher who lived in a street behind the Carmine Church, only survived her two years. At eight years old, the boy was taken by his aunt Mona Lapaccia, who declared herself unable to support him, to the neighbouring convent, where the Carmelites taught him to read and kept him in their service until, at the age of fifteen, he was admitted into the order. But the young novice had already shown signs of his talent for drawing. Instead of learning grammar, he scrawled faces over his copy-books and turned musical notes into arms and legs. The Prior, to do him justice, encouraged these artistic tastes, and Fra Filippo, after learning the elements of his art from some Giottesque master, spent his days in the church, watching Masaccio at work upon the frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel. The vivid realism of the new art, the sense of the value and meaning of human life that was slowly dawning upon the age, appealed forcibly to the young Carmelite who had so little vocation for the cloister and so keen a taste for mundane pleasures. Soon he outstripped all his fellow-students, and when, in 1428, Masaccio died at the early age of twenty-six, he was employed to continue the frescoes in the church and cloister. "The soul of Masaccio," it was said, "had entered into the body of Fra Lippi." These early works perished in the fire of 1771, but the word painter is affixed to his name in the convent records of 1430 and 1431. At the end of this year he left the convent to devote himself entirely to painting, but remained on

friendly terms with the friars, and continued to sign his pictures with his conventual name, Frater Philippus.

About this time, Vasari tells us, he fell into the hands of Moorish pirates, as he was sailing in a pleasure boat off the coast of Ancona, and was taken captive to Barbary and there sold as a slave. Here the skill with which he drew his master's portrait in charcoal, upon his prison-wall, produced so great an impression upon the Moors, that he was released and allowed to return to Italy. Whether this strange tale be true or not, it is certain we have no record of Fra Filippo's movements between 1431 and 1434, when we find him at Padua engaged in painting a tabernacle for the Church of Sant Antonio. In the same year, he received a commission from the nuns of S. Ambrogio of Florence, for an altar-piece which was not completed till 1441, and for which he received 1200 *lire*. This was the famous Coronation of the Virgin, which now hangs in the Academy of Florence. The treatment of the subject is distinctly original. Three rows of angels wearing garlands of roses and holding tall lilies in their hands, are seen standing before the throne of the Eternal; saints and bishops mingle with nuns and little children in the crowd of worshippers below.

> "God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
> Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
> Lilies and vestments and white faces sweet . . .
> And there, in the front, of course, a saint or two."

In the right hand, conspicuous by his brown Carmelite habit and shaven head among all these rich costumes and ornamental details, is Fra Lippi himself, raising his clasped hands devoutly, while a smiling angel, standing opposite, holds a scroll bearing the words, *Iste perfecit opus.*

This altar-piece, Vasari informs us, first won for the painter the friendship and patronage of Cosimo de' Medici, "the great man at the corner-house," who was then all-powerful in Florence. But some years before the S. Ambrogio picture was finished, Fra Filippo was already working for the Medici, and among the panels which he executed for the chapel of their palazzo in the Via Larga, was the Madonna here reproduced, and the charming lunettes of the Annunciation and the Seven Saints in the National Gallery. The patron-saints of the Medici house, Cosimo and Damiano, are prominent figures in the last-named group and the pedestal of the vase which holds the lily of the Annunciation, bears their family badge of three feathers fastened together by a ring. Commissions now reached the Carmelite painter from all sides. In 1438, he was engaged by the Captain of the Guild of Or San Michele, to paint the altar-piece of the Madonna and Saints, now in the Louvre, for a chapel in S. Spirito, a work which he declared cost him five years of continual toil by day and night, and in 1447 he completed two panels for the Palazzo Pubblico, one of which, the Vision of S. Bernard, is also in the National Gallery. At the same time his growing fame brought him orders from Perugia and Arezzo, and the Medici not only employed him to decorate their own chapels, but sent his works as gifts to the King of Naples and the Pope. And through Cosimo's influence he was, in 1642, appointed rector of S. Quirico, a parish near Florence, and chaplain to a nunnery in the neighbourhood.

But in spite of these emoluments and of the liberal payment which he received for his pictures, Fra Filippo was always poor and needy, always breaking his contracts and wrangling with his employers, always beset with angry creditors, and writing begging letters to his patrons. In August 1439, he addressed a piteous entreaty to Cosimo's son Piero, saying that he was the poorest friar in Florence, with four orphan nieces dependent upon him, and begging him to send supplies of corn and wine to his house for the sake of the poor children. Another time, when he was engaged upon a picture for Giovanni de' Medici, he sent an urgent request for a supply of gold and silver-leaf, which he was unable to buy, and confessed that he dared not stay in Florence for fear of his creditors. A week later, the agent of the Medici paid a visit to his workshop and found that the friar had absconded in the night and that a forced sale of his goods was in the act of taking place in his *atelier*. The cause of this penury, according to Vasari, lay in Fra Lippi's own lazy and dissolute habits, which led him constantly to neglect his work and waste his time and money in riotous living. On one occasion, Cosimo de' Medici is actually said to have locked the painter up in a room of the palace, in order to make him finish a picture, but even then the friar found means to escape, by knotting his bed-clothes into a rope, and letting himself down through the window. In 1455, he was brought before the Archbishop's court by one of his apprentices, to whom he owed forty *lire* and was forced to confess that he had forged the receipt which he produced. He was, in consequence, deprived of his office as rector of S. Quirico, and the Pope to whom he appealed, not only confirmed the sentence, but declared the said friar to have been guilty of many and great crimes, *plurima et nefanda scelera*.

In 1452, Fra Lippo was engaged to paint the choir of the Pieve or parish church of Prato, which Fra Angelico had been unable to undertake, and, four years later, he settled there and bought a house close to the Convent of Santa Margherita. At the same time he was appointed chaplain to the nuns and requested to paint a Madonna for the convent church. Although by this time past fifty, he fell in love with a beautiful young novice, Lucrezia Buti, who sat to him as model, and on the festival of the Sacra Cintola he carried her off to his house, where she was soon joined by her sister Spinetta, who was also a nun of Sta. Margherita. "I laughed heartily," wrote Giovanni de' Medici, "when I heard of Fra Filippo's escapade!" In 1457, Lucrezia gave birth to a son, who afterwards became known as the painter Filippino Lippi, but two years afterwards, both she and her sister returned to the convent and renewed their vows solemnly in the presence of the Bishop of Pistoja. Before long, however, the penitent nuns found the observance of the convent rule too irksome for their taste and, in 1461, once more sought refuge in Fra Filippo's house. This time a serious charge of unlawful abduction was brought against the painter, who sought the help of his Medici patrons, and at Cosimo's request, Pope Pius II. absolved both the guilty parties from their vows. Lucrezia remained with the painter as his lawful wife and is mentioned by name, together with a daughter, to whom she gave birth in 1465, in the will of her son Filippino.

Fra Lippi, being thus deprived of all his ecclesiastical offices, was compelled to devote himself more assiduously to painting, and the frescoes of the Pieve, which he had long neglected,

in spite of the threats and remonstrances of his employers, were at length finished. The history of S. John the Baptist and of S. Stephen, the patron saint of Prato, are the subjects here illustrated. On the right wall of the choir we have the "Birth of the Baptist, his departure for the desert, his ministry on the banks of Jordan, and finally his execution and the feast of Herodias. On the left we see the birth of Stephen, his ordination, preaching, and stoning. The portrait of Cardinal Carlo de' Medici, at that time vicar of Prato, is introduced in the last scene, among a group of ecclesiastics in full canonicals, standing at the foot of the bier, where the body of the dead martyr is laid, and a black-robed figure behind is said to be the likeness of the painter, whose signature, *Frater Filippus*, appears on a pediment in the corner. In these frescoes at Prato we see Fra Filippo at his best. The grandeur of the composition, the rich costumes and splendid architecture introduced, above all the striking character of the heads and dramatic vigour of the representation, deserve the high praise bestowed upon them by Morelli, who ranks them with Mantegna's Eremitani frescoes as the finest works of the Cinquecento.

When these frescoes were at length completed, Fra Filippo left Prato with his wife and children, and in 1467 moved to Spoleto, where he began to paint a new series of frescoes on the life of the Virgin, in the Cathedral choir. These works, upon which he was engaged for the next two years, are full of individual excellences, but have suffered greatly from injudicious restoration, and the latter subjects were completed by inferior hands. For, before the work was finished, Fra Filippo died, on October 4, 1469. His illness was short and sudden, and his death not without suspicion of poison, as Vasari is careful to inform us, "probably administered by his wife's relations." His faithful disciple, the Carmelite, Fra Diamante, who had followed him from Prato, buried the great artist—*pictor famosissimus*, as he is styled in the archives of the Carmine—in the Cathedral of Spoleto, where they had worked together. Eighteen years afterwards, Lorenzo de' Medici, mindful of the services which Fra Filippo had rendered to his house, himself visited Spoleto and sought permission to remove the painter's bones to Florence. But his request was declined by the municipality, and *Il Magnifico* had to content himself with raising a tomb of red and white marble, inscribed with an epitaph from Politian's pen, over the Carmelite friar's resting-place.

The exact place that Fra Filippo holds in the evolution of painting is not easy to define. He had neither Giotto nor Masaccio's strong sense of material significance, nor yet Fra Angelico's deep spiritual feeling. But his style has a charm and freshness of its own, and the part that he played in the development of art is more important than might at first sight be supposed. It was his to hand on the lessons that he had learnt from Masaccio in the dim Carmine chapel, and to set forth new ideals in the eyes of the next generation. And for this task he was fitted no less by Nature, than by the strange fate which made him a friar in that same Carmelite house. In his genial delight for all fair and pleasant things, in the rich ornament and glowing colour, the splendid architecture and sunny landscapes of his pictures, in the close attention which he bestows upon the lilies and daisies in the grass, and the garments and head-dresses of his women, above all in his love for merry urchins and round baby-faces, we see how strong

was the human element of his genius. This it was which fitted him to be in an especial manner the precursor of the Renaissance, and to proclaim to the men of his day that sense of a fuller and larger life that was slowly dawning upon the Italy of the fifteenth century. And to-day, as we look at these Madonnas bending in motherly love over their babies, or stand before the fading frescoes on the walls of the Duomo of Prato, we realise the power of this master, whom Michelangelo not only admired, but strove to imitate, and say with Vasari, "*Fù gran uomo*"—"After all he was a great man."

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

1446–1510

WHEN Fra Filippo died in 1469, his son Filippino was sent to learn painting in the shop of Sandro Botticelli, who was then counted the best master in Florence. During the next thirty years he maintained this position and stood high in the favour of successive generations of Medici. In his treatise on painting, Leonardo da Vinci quotes him as a great authority, and the extraordinary demand for his pictures at one time, is shown by the immense quantity of Madonnas, executed indeed by inferior hands, but all bearing the stamp of his invention, that are still to be seen in every gallery of Europe. And now after centuries of neglect, Botticelli is once more high in popular favour. One reason for the interest and admiration which he excites, is that he appeals to us in so many different ways. Some of us are charmed by his wonderful sense of movement or mastery of line and decorative design. Others are thrilled by the poetry of his imagination and his profound spiritual feeling. The range of his art is as wide as the culture of the Renaissance, and his works reflect the aspirations and ideals of his age, the different currents of thought in Florence in the days of the Medici, more completely than those of any other painter. Alessandro Filipepi, the youngest of a family of four brothers, was apprenticed as a boy to a goldsmith, but took his own name of Botticelli, not as Vasari tells us, from his first employer, but from his elder brother Giovanni, who acquired the nickname of Botticelli, from the tub which was the sign of his broker's shop. Sandro, however, soon left the goldsmith's *bottega* to enter Fra Filippo's *atelier*, and worked with him until he left Prato for Spoleto, by which time he was already an independent master.

Two pictures, one round, the other oblong, representing the Adoration of the Magi, in the National Gallery, and there ascribed to his pupil Filippino Lippi are now recognised by some as of the best critics as early works of Botticelli. Both the Madonna and Child bear a marked resemblance to the types of his master Fra Filippo, but in the animation of the surrounding groups we already see marks of the scholar's hand. Several of the painter's early works are also to be seen in the Uffizi, amongst others, the little pictures of S. Augustine in his study, of Judith bearing a sword in one hand and an olive-branch in the other, and a seated figure of Fortitude which was

evidently a companion to the Virtues painted by the Pollainoli for the Mercatanzia, or Tribunal of Commerce. In this Judith who goes quietly home in the strength of her great deed, and this Fortezza who looks at us with her sad patient eyes, the spiritual note already makes itself felt. And in the Judith we already see the long neck, angular features, and dreamy expression of Botticelli's peculiar type, a type not beautiful, hardly even attractive, which none the less compels our attention and fascinates us with its sense of perpetual yearning. This is the type that we see repeated, with many different variations, in the circular Madonnas surrounded by child-angels, which, originally suggested by the marble or terra-cotta roundels of Mino da Fiesole and Luca della Robbia, soon became the most popular sacred pictures in Florence. One of the earliest of these is the Madonna of the Pomegranate, in the Uffizi, who looks down upon us with great sorrowful eyes, attended by singing boys and angels crowned with roses, a picture painted in all probability about 1470. The finest and most famous, the Virgin writing the Magnificat, is also in the Uffizi, but belongs to a later period. One of the few of Botticelli's sacred pictures to which a date can with certainty be assigned, is the fine S. Sebastian at Berlin, which was painted in 1473, for the Church of S. Maria Maggiore and reveals in a remarkable degree the knowledge of the human form and power of expression which the artist had already attained.

Sandro's powerful and interesting personality, no less than his artistic genius, early attracted the attention of Lorenzo de' Medici. An ardent student and lover of Dante, who is even said to have written a commentary on the Divine Comedy, Botticelli was versed in all the learning of the day, and the pictures which he painted for the Medici villa at Castello show how fully he entered into the spirit of the humanists and poets of the day. The famous "Birth of Venus" in the Uffizi, the "Primavera" of the Academy, and the "Mars" and "Venus" of the National Gallery, were evidently inspired by passages from the "Giostra," that unfinished poem which Poliziano wrote in honour of the tournament held in 1475, on the Piazza di Santa Croce, when Giuliano de' Medici bore off the prize before the eyes of his adored lady, *la bella Simonetta*. That wonderful "Venus," borne on the waves and blown by sea-breezes to the laurel groves on the flowery shore, had been exactly described in the poet's verse. Sandro has painted her in the very attitude, laying one hand on her heart, and the other on her long tresses of golden hair, surrounded by the same flying draperies and falling roses. Only, instead of the three nymphs whom Poliziano describes as awaiting her coming, the painter has represented one alone, clad in a white robe, patterned over with blue corn-flowers, and spreading a pink daisy-sown mantle to fold around this sea-born Aphrodite. And in the same way, Sandro's beautiful vision of Spring agrees exactly with Poliziano's verses on the "Garden of Venus." The joy of the young May-time was a favourite theme with the poets of Lorenzo's day, and all the bright and pleasant imagery of their songs lives again in this picture of the bower where "Venus" reigns and Spring enters, garlanded with roses, and radiant with youth and beauty. At her feet the flowers spring up in the grass, and the Graces, draped in gauzy white, dance hand in hand under the myrtle groves. There Zephyr sports with Flora, and Mercury, in the guise of the handsome Giuliano, goes before to scatter the clouds of winter with his wand, while Cupid, hovering in the air, aims a shaft at his heart.

But a tragic doom soon overshadowed these dreams of love and youth. Before Poliziano's poem

was finished, the fair Simonetta died suddenly and was borne, with her face uncovered, through the streets of Florence, to her grave. Two years afterwards, on the 26th of April, 1478, Giuliano himself was murdered by the Pazzi at the most solemn moment of the mass, in Santa Maria del Fiore, and fell pierced with nineteen wounds. Botticelli was employed to paint the effigies of the conspirators on the walls of the Palazzo Pubblico, and afterwards commemorated the triumph of the Medici over their foes, in the recently discovered picture of "Pallas subduing the Centaur." A striking portrait of Giuliano from his hand is in the Morelli collection, at Bergamo, and three generations of the Medici family figure in the fine "Adoration of the Magi," which he painted at Lorenzo's command for Santa Maria Novella. Cosimo, an aged and grey-headed king, is seen kneeling at the feet of the Virgin and Child, with his two sons Piero and Giovanni at his side, and Giuliano and Lorenzo are among the youths standing by, while in the man wearing a yellow mantle on the right, we recognise the painter's own strong and thoughtful face. It was for another member of the Medici house, Lorenzo di Pier Francesco, that Botticelli executed the ninety-three precious drawings in illustration of the "Divina Commedia," which, after being long in the Ashburnham collection, were bought some years ago for the Berlin Museum.

In 1480, Botticelli painted a fresco of S. Augustine at his desk, as a companion to Ghirlandajo's "S. Jerome" in the church of Ognissanti, and two years later, he was summoned to Rome by Pope Sixtus IV. to decorate his newly-erected chapel in the Vatican. The three frescoes by his hand in the Sistina, are characteristic examples both of his excellences and defects. In illustrating the story of Moses, instead of concentrating his forces on one grand composition, he breaks up the picture into seven different subjects, which leave the spectator with a sense of confusion. Yet many of the separate groups are full of charm, and he seldom painted a more gracious figure than that of "Zipporah" standing under the palm-trees at the well, with a myrtle wreath in her hair and a distaff and apple-bough, the symbols of labour and its reward, in her hand. We are conscious of the same absence of unity in the fresco of the "Temptation," where a procession of richly-clad worshippers assist at the temple service and the chief actors in the scene, Christ and the tempter, are descried afar, standing on a distant pinnacle of the building. In the history of Korah, the figure of Moses stretching out his rod to destroy the rebellious people, gives a certain unity to the whole, but the general effect is injured by the exaggerated action of Korah's followers. Force here degenerates into violence, and despair verges upon extravagance. A faithful reproduction of the "Arch of Constantine," and several ruined temples in the background, bear witness to the deep impression left upon the painter's mind by this visit to Rome.

In 1484, Botticelli returned to Florence, and in 1486 he painted two subjects *in tempera* on the walls of Villa Lemmi, near Fiesole, to celebrate the marriage of Lorenzo Tornabuoni, a kinsman of the Medici, to Giovanna degli Albizzi. These works were only discovered under a thick coat of whitewash in 1873, and have been removed to the Louvre. In the one, Lorenzo is received by the seven liberal arts and sciences; in the other his bride is welcomed to her new home by Venus and the Graces. Here the delicate touch of his fancy is manifest in the maidens whose airy grace and sprightly motion recall the nymphs of the Primavera. But a new influence now made itself felt in the painter's life. In 1490, Savonarola began to preach in Florence. His voice

had a strange fascination for the scholars and artists of Lorenzo's circle. Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola, Cronaca and Michelangelo alike paused to listen, and heard his teaching gladly. And Sandro caught, what Vasari in his contemptuous way calls "the new frenzy," and threw himself into the Piagnone movement with all the energy of his nature. He illustrated Savonarola's sermons, painted processional banners, and designed a large plate of the Triumph of Fra Girolamo. But Vasari's statement that he gave up painting on this account is plainly untrue. On the contrary, several of his finest pictures belong to this period.

The "Coronation of the Virgin" in the Academy was painted for Savonarola's own convent church of S. Marco, by order of the Guild of Silk-Weavers. In the upper part, the Father, wearing the triple tiara, places a crown on the brows of the kneeling Virgin, while a troop of angels dance on the clouds in a tumult of wild rapture, and one winged child, borne upwards as it were by the uncontrollable power of love, darts to the side of Mary to share in her joy and triumph. Even the aged Saints who stand below, look up with eager eyes at the dancing seraphs, and seem to catch something of their ecstasy. Perhaps these boy-angels with their streaming locks and flying draperies were meant to recall the white-robed children who danced round the bonfire of Vanities at the Frate's bidding. Another picture that bears a marked resemblance to this Coronation, is the fine altar-piece formerly in the Bardi chapel of S. Spirito, and now at Berlin. Here the Madonna is throned in a bower of palm and myrtle, between the white-bearded Evangelist S. John, and the rugged and hairy Baptist of the wilderness. Tall pots of flowering lilies and olive boughs, and copper bowls filled with red and white roses, painted with all Sandro's loving care, adorn the stone balustrade of the garden, and a small figure of Christ on the Cross, at the base of the picture, reminds us that the painter was a follower of the Frate, and owned Christ as king in Florence.

Both the small subjects from the legend of S. Zenobius in the Mond Collection and at Dresden, as well as the story of Virginia at Bergamo and the Death of Lucretia exhibited at the New Gallery in 1894, and now in America, belong to this period. So too does the splendid "Allegory of Calumny" that Botticelli painted for his intimate friend Antonio Segni, and which is now in the Uffizi. The subject is taken from Lucian's description of a picture by Apelles, which had been rendered familiar to Italian humanists by a quotation in Leon Battista Alberti's "Treatise on Painting," but the fierce strife of factions in Florence and the tragedy of Savonarola's end, may well have stirred the master's heart when he painted this allegory of the violence and injustice of man. The scene is laid in a stately portico adorned with statuary, where Midas, weary of the importunities of Ignorance and Suspicion, holds out his hand to Calumny, a richly clad woman bearing the torch of discord in one hand, and dragging the prostrate youth Innocence by the other. Envy, Intrigue, and Treachery attend her steps, and Remorse, in the shape of a ragged old hag with tottering limbs, looks back at Truth, a nude figure pointing up to heaven, in the calm certainty that there her mute appeal will be heard. The pillars of the loggia at the back, open out on a wide expanse of yellow-green sea, bounded by no further shore, and giving that indefinable sense of dreariness—the expression of the conviction fast growing on the painter's soul, that nowhere on earth were truth and justice to be found.

But the best proof we have of the passionate belief with which Sandro clung to the faith of the Frate, is the Nativity which he painted two years and a half after Savonarola's death. The mystical intention of the picture is explained by the Greek inscription on the panel, which has been thus interpreted by Mr. Sidney Colvin : "This picture I, Alessandro, painted at the end of the year 1500, in the troubles of Italy, in the half-time after the time, during the fulfilment of the Eleventh of S. John in the Second Woe of the Apocalypse, in the loosing of the devil for three years and a half. Afterwards he shall be chained, according to the Twelfth of John, and we shall see him trodden down as in this picture." The Holy Family as usual occupies the centre of the picture, the shepherds and Magi kneel on either side, and a troop of angels clad in symbolic hues of red, white and green, sing the Gloria in Excelsis on the pent-house roof, while in the opened heavens above, twelve more seraphs dance hand in hand, swinging olive-branches and dangling their golden crowns in an ecstasy of joy. In the foreground, devils are seen crawling away to hide themselves in the rocks, and rejoicing angels fall upon the necks of Savonarola and his martyred companions, the witnesses slain for the word of their testimony, as described in the Eleventh chapter of the Book of Revelation. So the painter would have us know that, in these dark times of trial and persecution, his faith in the Friar had never faltered, and that he still looked forward to a day when the prophet's word should be accomplished, and good triumph over evil.

In 1503, Botticelli was summoned, among the chief artists in Florence, to choose a site for his friend Michelangelo's colossal statue of David. After that we hear no more of him, and all we know is that he died on the 17th of May, 1510, and was buried by the side of his old father, in the parish church of Ognissanti.

DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO

1449–1494

DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO was the son of a silk merchant, named Tommaso Bigordi, and began life in the shop of a goldsmith who was noted as a maker of the gold and silver garlands worn by the Florentine women of the day. To this circumstance he owed his nickname *del Ghirlandajo*, in the Tuscan dialect *Grillandajo*, by which both he and his younger brother David became known. Domenico early showed his skill for portraiture by taking drawings of the men and women whom he saw walking in the streets, and before long he left the goldsmith's shop to study painting under Alessio Baldovinetti. Both his natural gifts and early training fitted him for the position that he occupies as the central figure of the Florentine realists. Essentially prosaic by nature, and lacking the higher artistic gifts, Ghirlandajo was an able and accomplished master, gifted with rare facility of hand, and with a keen eye for all the small details of domestic life and their accompanying surroundings. His natural taste for architecture was developed by a visit to Rome, where he and his brother were employed in the Vatican library, during the winter of 1475, and where he painted a fresco over the tomb of Francesco Tornabuoni's wife, in S. Maria sopra Minerva. He made good use of his spare time on this occasion, and took several careful drawings of the temples, baths, and other classical remains, which in after years he often introduced in the background of his works. In 1480, he is described in a Florentine income-tax return as a painter by trade, living with his father, and having a wife of nineteen, Costanza by name. In the same year he executed the fresco of S. Jerome in the church of Ognissanti, a vigorous piece of work, in which the variegated pattern of the tablecloth, the flask and cardinal's hat on the shelf, are all painted with Dutch-like precision. A Cenacolo in the refectory of the neighbouring convent, also bears the date of 1480, and was afterwards repeated, with some variations, in the smaller refectory of S. Marco. The traditional form of composition is retained in both, and there is the same lack of dramatic intention, together with the same accurate rendering of the dishes and water-bottles, the cherries on the table and the fruit and foliage of the trees in the background.

The next ten years (1480–1490) were marked by many important works, executed with

amazing rapidity by this industrious artist, who often said that he longed to decorate the entire circle of the walls of Florence with frescoes. Between 1481 and 1485, he painted a grand fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico, representing the "Apotheosis of S. Zenobius," the patron saint of Florence, with figures of Roman warriors above, and a view of the Duomo and Baptistery in the background. In 1482, he executed several frescoes at S. Gimignano, and went to Rome at the invitation of Pope Sixtus IV., to work in the Vatican Chapel with Botticelli and other well-known artists. There he painted a "Resurrection," which has been destroyed, and a fresco of the "Calling of S. Peter and S. Andrew." In this fine composition he follows Masaccio closely, and at the same time gratifies his own inclination by introducing a number of contemporary personages. After his return to Florence three years were devoted to the frescoes on the "Life of S. Francis," in the Sassetti Chapel of the Trinità Church. Here, again, we have a number of portraits, including those of "Lorenzo de' Medici" and the painter himself. Both in execution and design these works show a marked improvement; the arrangement is simple and dignified, the colour refined and harmonious, while there is an evident attempt at expression in the last fresco of the series. The death of the saint, and the careless indifference of the choristers and of the mitred bishop, who chants the service with his spectacles on his nose, forms a striking contrast to the grief of the sorrowing friars. It is curious to see how closely Ghirlandajo has followed Giotto's rendering of the same subject without being able to improve upon his composition. But, in spite of the great advance in anatomy and technique which had been made during the last century, in spite of the rich costumes and splendid architecture with which Ghirlandajo adorns the subject, his work lacks the supreme qualities that move us so deeply in Giotto's work, and we feel how far short he falls of his great forerunner. Yet, for vigorous life-like rendering, nothing can surpass the admirable portraits of "Francesco Sassetti" and "Madonna Nera," his wife, whom Ghirlandajo has represented on either side of the high altar in this same chapel.

No sooner had the master completed the frescoes of the Trinità, than he set to work on a third great series, "The History of the Baptist and of the Virgin" in Santa Maria Novella. The commission was given him by Giovanni Tornabuoni, who agreed to pay him 1000 gold florins, and to add 200 more, if he were satisfied with the result. When, however, at the end of four years the great series was completed, Giovanni expressed the utmost satisfaction with the painter's work, but begged him to be content with the sum which had been originally named. Ghirlandajo, who seems to have been comparatively indifferent to gain, agreed without a murmur; but afterwards his patron's conscience seems to have been uneasy; and when, in 1492, the painter fell ill at Pisa, he sent him a present of 100 florins. These twenty-one subjects, which Ghirlandajo and his scholars painted in the choir of S. Maria Novella, have been much injured by damp, and the decorative effect of the better preserved scenes is marred by the crowd of figures introduced. They are, we feel all through, the work of a very clever and highly trained artist, who unfortunately lacked the divine spark of genius. But taken merely as illustrations of contemporary Florentine life, they are of great interest. All the poets and Platonists of Lorenzo's day are here: Angelo Poliziano, Marsilio Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, Gentile de' Becchi, together with the members of the Tornabuoni family. Here too are Giovanna degli Albizzi, the bride of Villa Lemmi,

and Ginevra de' Benci, in her yellow gown, and other beauties of the day, in all the finery of their gorgeous robes and rich jewels. On the one hand, in the guests assembled at Herod's banquet, or meeting in the temple courts, we see the public and official life of Florence, on the other we catch a glimpse of their private and domestic habits. We enter the chamber where the mother has given birth to a child, and see the friends who have come to wish her joy, the peasant-woman carrying a basket of fruit on her head, the nurse dandling the new-born infant, the maids preparing the bath. We note the antique frieze and bas reliefs that adorn the rooms, the splendid porticoes and Renaissance columns, the rich brocades and velvets worn by the wealthy Florentines. Here and there the painter has been a little over-anxious to display his skill. He puts in a distant window to show his understanding of perspective, and introduces a naked beggar as a proof of his knowledge of anatomy, while a perfect gale of wind blows out the skirts of the maid, who is pouring out water for the child's bath. But, as a whole, these compositions are stately and imposing, and may well have seemed little short of marvellous to Ghirlandajo's contemporaries.

Many of this master's finest easel-pictures were produced during the four years that he was at work on the frescoes of Sta. Maria Novella. "The Adoration of the Shepherds" in the Academy, was painted for the high altar of the Sassetti Chapel in 1485, the large "Coronation" in the Town Hall at Narni, was finished in 1486, and the round "Adoration" in the Uffizi, bears the date, 1487. The last-named subject was repeated on a larger scale, with still more elaborate accessories, for the Chapel of the Spedale degli Innocenti, in the following year. The fine "Madonna" of the Uffizi, attended by archangels and bishops, was originally painted for the Church of S. Giusto, and another Madonna with a rich oriental carpet in the Academy, belongs to the same period, although bearing no date. In 1491, he painted the "Visitation" now in the Louvre, for Lorenzo Tornabuoni's chapel in S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, but this picture was evidently finished by his assistants, probably Bastiano Mainardi, or his own brother David. In the same year, Ghirlandajo was chosen, together with his brother and Botticelli, to execute a mosaic decoration for the Chapel of S. Zanobi, in the Duomo of Florence, but the work was ultimately abandoned, owing to the death of Lorenzo de' Medici. Two years before, Ghirlandajo had executed the mosaic of the "Annunciation" over one of the Cathedral doors, and took much pleasure in the work, saying that mosaic was painting for eternity. The same indefatigable zeal prompted him to accept orders of the most varied kind. Even the candelabra of the Duomo were sent to his shop to be re-gilt and decorated, and he told his assistants, jestingly, that they must never decline a commission, were it only an order for the hoops of a peasant-woman's basket.

Vasari tells us that Ghirlandajo decorated a chapel at the Villa Tornabuoni with frescoes, but the building was destroyed by floods in the next century. He also painted altar-frescoes at Lucca and Pisa, and, in 1492, undertook to execute a large picture for a convent at Volterra, which has lately been removed to the Town Hall of that city. This was probably his last work. In the midst of these labours and in the full tide of his renown, this active and prolific master was cut off by a sudden death. The sad event is recorded in the following terms, in the archives of the confraternity of S. Paul, "Domenico de Churrado Bighordi, painter, called del Grillandaio, died on Saturday

morning, on the 11th day of January, 1493 (O.S.), of a pestilential fever, and the overseers desired that no one should see the dead man, and would not allow him to be buried by day. He was buried on Saturday night after sunset, and may God forgive him! It was a very great loss, for he was a man highly esteemed for many qualities, and universally lamented." Ghirlandajo was twice married, and left nine children, the eldest of whom Ridolfo, became a painter of repute and the intimate friend of Raphael. His first wife, Costanza, died in 1485, and a year later he married a widow of San Gimignano, Antonia di Ser Paolo. Several of his assistants, such as Mainardi and Granacei, were excellent artists and did good work in their day, but the fame of all alike was eclipsed by one boy, who grew up in this busy workshop and received his earliest lessons on the scaffolding of S. Maria Novella. It is the glory of Ghirlandajo to have been the first to recognise the genius of Michelangelo.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

1452–1519

THE richest gifts of Heaven are sometimes showered upon the same man, and beauty, grace, and genius are combined in so rare a manner in one person, that to whatsoever he may apply himself, his every action is so divine as to leave all others far behind him." With these words Vasari begins his biography of that most gifted of mortals, Leonardo da Vinci. The personal beauty and heroic strength by which he was distinguished, the brilliant conversation and fascinating presence that charmed all hearts, were only the outward signs of a marvellously refined and subtle intellect, and of a mental energy that has been rarely equalled. In this wonderful man, the highest scientific and artistic faculties were united, and the passion for practical knowledge went hand in hand with the finest imaginative genius. There was hardly a branch of human learning which Leonardo did not seek to explore. Architecture, sculpture, painting, mathematics, geology, engineering, and anatomy, all in turn absorbed his attention. He wrote an elaborate treatise on painting, and filled volumes with his observations on scientific subjects. He played and sang divinely, painted pictures and modelled statues, planned canals and tunnels, discovered the use of water and steam as a motive force, and in the words of a contemporary French writer was "not only an excellent artist and a veritable Archimedes, but a very great philosopher." So universal a genius naturally had but little time to devote to any one art, and spent the greater part of his days in seeking after a perfection to which he could not attain. In consequence, he left few works of art behind him, and of these few the greater number have perished. But the little that remains is of so fine a quality that his name will never cease to rank among the world's supreme masters.

Leonardo was born in 1452 at Vinci, a village in the mountains of Val d'Arno, near Empoli, half-way between Florence and Pisa, and was the illegitimate son of a Florentine notary. His mother, Caterina, a country girl of Vinci, married a native of the village soon after the birth of her child, and died many years afterwards in a hospital in Florence, dutifully tended by her illustrious son. His father, Piero da Vinci, was an active and prosperous man, who married four wives in succession and had eleven other children, but Leonardo, who for twenty-four years remained his only

child, was brought up in his house and treated in all respects as his legitimate son. The boy early showed extraordinary talent for music and mathematics, as well as for drawing and modelling, and was placed by his father in Andrea Verrocchio's workshop, where he remained till 1476. Besides the famous angel which young Leonardo is supposed to have painted in the "Baptism" which his master executed for the monks of Vallombrosa, two more of his early works have been recently discovered. One is a little "Annunciation" in the Louvre, which had long been ascribed to his fellow-pupil, Lorenzo di Credi; the other, a lovely profile of a maiden, in the collection of Donna Laura Minghetti, in Rome. Both were evidently painted in Verrocchio's shop, and bear strong marks of his influence. The type of the face and folds of the drapery in the former picture, the cypresses and stone balustrade of the garden, where the scene is laid, closely resemble the earlier "Annunciation" painted by Verrocchio in the Uffizi, while the clearly-cut features of the portrait recall many similar profiles, which came out of the goldsmith's shop. But in both we are conscious of that straining after a higher ideal and purer loveliness, which never ceased to haunt the brain of this painter, who, as a boy, modelled terra-cotta heads of smiling women, and followed the beautiful unknown faces which he saw, up and down the streets of Florence.

In January 1478, Leonardo received a commission for an altar-piece to be placed in the Chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico, and sketched out the "Adoration of the Kings" in brown monochrome, which now hangs in the Uffizi. The familiar subject is set in a mountainous landscape, with a ruined colonnade and broad flight of steps on one side, and a group of fighting horsemen on the other. In the foreground, the three Kings kneel before the youthful Virgin, and behind a crowd of followers on foot and horseback press forward with eager devotion on their faces. The scene is full of life and animation; each face and gesture is rendered with striking power. But this noble design was left unfinished, as Vasari remarks, "like so many of the painter's other works." So too was another monochrome of this period, the boldly fore-shortened figure of a kneeling S. Jerome, in the Vatican, while an important commission which the painter received in 1481, from the monks of S. Donato, never seems to have been even begun.

The anonymous author of the short life of Leonardo in the Magliabecchiana Library, who wrote about 1540, tells us that Lorenzo de' Medici sent the painter, when he was thirty years old, with the musician Atalanta Migliorotti, to bear a lute to Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan. Vasari confirms this statement, adding that the instrument was a silver lute of Leonardo's own invention on which he played with surpassing sweetness. Whether the date is correct or not, he certainly left Florence about the year 1482, and we hear no more of him until 1487, in which year he was living at Milan and designed a model for the cupola of the Duomo. But some rough drafts of letters addressed to the Governor of Syria, which Dr. Richter discovered among Leonardo's MSS., seem to prove that at one time during these five years he was employed by the Sultan of Egypt on engineering works in Armenia. From 1487 to 1499, he lived at Milan in the service of Lodovico Sforza, who found his versatile talents of the greatest use and employed him in turn to arrange court pageants, construct canals, and paint pictures. During this active and brilliant period of his life, in the midst of all his other occupations, Leonardo wrote his "Treatise on Painting" for the instruction of the Academy founded by the Duke, and modelled the colossal statue of Franceso Sforza which met with so

untimely a fate. And there, in the last years of the century, he painted that great masterpiece of his life, the ruined "Last Supper," in the Dominican refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie. Instead of working in fresco, a process that did not admit of the endless alterations and improvements prompted by his fastidious taste, Leonardo painted in oils on a dry stucco ground which soon crumbled away, and when Vasari wrote, the great picture was already a wreck.

After the fall of Lodovico Sforza in 1500, Leonardo left Milan and spent the next sixteen years in perpetual journeyings up and down Italy. In 1500, he was at Mantua and Venice, the next year he spent some time in Florence and designed the famous cartoon of the Virgin, S. Anne and the Child playing with a lamb, which excited so much enthusiasm among the crowds who thronged to see it, in the hall of the Servite Convent. But after all, the altar-piece was never painted, for in 1502, Leonardo entered the service of Cæsar Borgia as military engineer, and in this capacity visited Urbino, Romini, Perugia, Orvieto, Volterra, and other cities of Central Italy. After the fall of Borgia, he returned to Florence, early in 1504, and was engaged with Michelangelo, to adorn the Council Hall of the Palazzo Pubblico with great historical compositions. The battle of Anghiari was the subject chosen by Leonardo, who worked for two years assiduously at the cartoon, and then began to paint in oils on the plaster of the walls. The design, we are told, was magnificent, but the method again proved disastrous, and in disgust at his failure, Leonardo abandoned the work to the great annoyance of the Signoria. "Leonardo," wrote the Gonfaloniere, Piero Soderini, in October 1506, to the French Governor of Milan, "has not treated the Republic well. He received a large sum of money, but has only made a small beginning of his work. He has, in fact, acted like a traitor." The painter, to do him justice, offered to return the money, but the magistrates declined to take it back, and allowed him to accept the invitation of Louis XII. of France, who had longed wished to retain his services. In 1507, he went to Milan, where he assisted the French king in celebrating his triumphal entry, and planned various hydraulic works for his newly acquired province. Both in 1511 and 1512, he paid visits to Florence, and in 1514, accompanied Giuliano de' Medici to Rome, on the occasion of Leo the Tenth's coronation. In 1515, he met the victorious French king, Francis the First, at Pavia, and accompanied him to France early in the following year. This monarch appointed him court painter with a salary of 700 florins, and gave him the small house of Cloux, near the royal château of Amboise, as his residence. Here Leonardo spent the last three years of his life in this quiet county home, with his faithful scholar Melzi and two Italian servants, Battista and Maturina, as his companions. Soon after his arrival in France, his health began to show signs of weakness, and the Cardinal d'Aragon, who paid him a visit on the 10th of October, 1516, gives a pathetic account of the great master's failing powers. After describing the picture of "The Virgin and Child resting on the lap of S. Anne," "all most perfectly painted," he goes on to say, "how, by reason of a certain paralysis that has affected his right hand, the master cannot now paint with his old sweetness, but is still able to make designs and teach others, and has trained a Milanese assistant, who does his work fairly well." On the 23rd of April, 1519, Leonardo made a will, leaving his papers to Melzi, the vineyard which Lodovico Sforza had given him at Milan, to his servant Battista and his favourite pupil Salai, the handsome youth with the curled and waving hair; and to his half-brothers the sum of 400 ducats,

which he had deposited in the bank at Sta. Maria Nuova of Florence. A week or two later, on the 2nd of May, the great man died, and was buried in the cloisters of the royal chapel at Amboise, where, in obedience to his wishes, sixty torch-bearers followed him to the grave, and thirty masses were said for the repose of his soul.

All early writers agree in saying that Leonardo completed very few of his paintings. The Anonimo's statement to this effect is confirmed by Paolo Giovio and Lomazzo. And when Isabella d'Este begged the distinguished Carmelite preacher, Fra Pietro di Nuvolaria, to ask Leonardo for a picture, he replied that the great man was too deeply absorbed in mathematical experiments to take up a brush. As the Servite brothers found to their cost, he kept his employers waiting for months without even making a beginning; and when he did attempt a drawing, seldom got further than the preliminary sketch. "When he began to paint, he seemed," writes Lomazzo, "as if he were overcome with fear. And he could finish nothing, because his soul was so filled with the greatness of art, that he saw faults in pictures which others hailed as marvellous creations." When he was painting the "Last Supper," he would remain three or four days without touching the picture, and merely stand before it with folded arms, lost in contemplation. At other times, he would leave the citadel, where he was modelling his colossal horse, and hurry through the blazing streets of Milan, in the noonday heat, to add a few touches to the painting, and then return immediately.

Two Madonnas and one portrait are the only oil paintings that remain to us of his mature period. The first of these is the "Vierge aux Rochers" in the Louvre, which he painted during the brilliant days of his life at Milan. Here he breaks away from the old Florentine traditions, and proclaims himself as a great and original master. The delicate grace of the Virgin and children, and of the lovely angel pointing with his uplifted finger to Christ, the play of light over the rocky hollows of the cavern, reveal the presence of a new power in art. The replica of this picture in the National Gallery was at one time supposed by some critics to be the original work, but it is impossible to deny the superior merits of the "Vierge aux Rochers," and recently discovered documents may be considered to have settled the question. About 1490, Leonardo, it appears, painted an altar-piece for the Chapel of the Conception in the Church of S. Francesco, at Milan; but since the Brothers who gave the order, refused to pay more than 25 ducats for the picture, he sold it to an agent of Louis the Twelfth, for four times this amount. A replica of Leonardo's composition, with some variations, was painted by his assistants and placed in the Chapel of S. Francesco, where it remained, until Gavin Hamilton bought it in 1777, for the sum of 30 ducats. He brought the picture with him to England, and sold it as a Leonardo to Lord Suffolk, from whom the National Gallery acquired it, in 1880. The other Madonna, known as "La Sainte Anne," and also in the Louvre, belongs to a later period, and is partly the work of Leonardo's hand. The composition agrees with that of the cartoon which he designed for the Servi brothers, and which is described in Fra Pietro di Nuvolaria's letter to Isabella d'Este. The Virgin, clad in a pale blue robe, is resting on her mother's knee, and bends forward to hold the Child who is at play with a lamb. The group is designed with all Leonardo's wonted grace, and numerous studies for the figure by his hand are to be seen at Windsor, but the execution is less finished and the colour less transparent

than that of the "Vierge aux Rochers." The picture is evidently the same which the Cardinal of Aragon saw in the painter's *atelier* in Cloux, in 1516, when he had to depend mainly upon assistants for the execution of his designs. After his death, it was brought back to Milan, where it was purchased by Cardinal Richelieu, in the next century.

The portrait of Mona Lisa, the beautiful Neapolitan wife of Zanobi del Giocondo, belongs to Leonardo's Florentine days and is said to have occupied him four years. It was afterwards bought by Francis I. for the large sum of 4000 gold florins, and is now one of the chief ornaments of the Salon Carré. Although the colour has faded and the shadows have lost some of their transparency, this picture is in a better state of preservation and gives us a truer idea of Leonardo's technique than any other. The exquisite simplicity of the pose, the soft tints of blue and yellow in the dress, the delicately painted rocks and waters, all serve to heighten the indescribable charm of the wonderful face with the brown eyes and haunting smile. In spite of the lapse of years, Vasari's description still holds good. "The eyes have all the liquid sparkle of Nature, you see the pulse beating in the dimple of the throat, and the smile is so enchanting, it seems a thing more divine than human life itself."

To these three masterpieces, we may add the cartoon of the Virgin and Child with S. Anne in the Royal Academy, in which we see, not indeed a finished drawing, but that most interesting of all things, the first thought of a great picture. And this brings us to the last and most wonderful phase of Leonardo's art, the vast quantity of drawings which are still preserved in the galleries of the Uffizi and the Louvre, in the Venetian Academy, the Ambrosian Library, and the royal collection at Windsor. These, as we all know, are of the most varied description, and include angels' heads, studies of children and horses, flowers and brambles, together with sketches of monuments and hydraulic machines, caricatures and grotesques. Everywhere we see the same passionate desire to penetrate the mysteries and learn the secrets of Nature. All forms of life attracted his eager imagination. Nothing was too minute or insignificant to escape his notice. We find whole sheets covered with studies of bones and muscles, together with minute indications explaining the structure and movement of the human frame. And in the midst of all this varied and amazing display of mental activity, we come across lovely women faces wearing Mona Lisa's exquisite smile, and heads of fair boys, with the curled and wavy locks he loved so well. As we turn over these wonderful pages, we realise more and more the rare creative faculty of the man, and feel that we are brought face to face with the most brilliant intellect and the most richly gifted nature which the world has ever known.

LORENZO DI CREDI

1459–1537

LORENZO DI CREDI belonged to the group of Florentine painters in the last half of the fifteenth century, who were directly influenced by sculptors and metal-workers, and was himself one of a race of goldsmiths. He learnt the trade first of all in his father Andrea di Credi's shop, and afterwards worked under Verrocchio, in that famous *bottega* where so much of the finest art of the Renaissance had its birth. There Lorenzo grew up with Perugino and Leonardo as his comrades and became the favourite scholar of Verrocchio, who, when he died at Venice in 1488, recommended him to the Doge in his will as well qualified to complete his unfinished equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni. This, however, proved a task beyond Lorenzo's powers, and the bronze statue was ultimately completed by the Venetian Leopardi. Verrocchio further showed his confidence in his beloved scholar, by appointing him executor of his will, and leaving him his stock of metal and stone, as well as his household goods both in Florence and Venice. Lorenzo, who had hastened to Venice on hearing of his master's death, brought back Verrocchio's remains to be buried in Sant' Ambrogio of Florence, and never left his native city again. His gentle and affectionate nature endeared him to all his brother-artists, and the confidence which they placed in his judgment is shown by their frequent appeals to him, to settle disputes or value pictures and statues. His own range of art was almost entirely limited to easel-pictures of sacred subjects, chiefly Madonnas and Nativities, or Annunciations. He began, Vasari tells us, by copying Verrocchio and Leonardo's Madonnas, which he did to such perfection, that it was almost impossible to distinguish the copy from the original, and his "Virgin of the Borghese" with the pot of flowers on the parapet, seems to have deceived the historian himself. This little picture was long ascribed to Leonardo and is finished with the miniature-like care that marked all Lorenzo's work, and made Vasari exclaim, that such excessive labour was as blameworthy as extreme negligence. "So great was his care to keep his colours clean," writes the biographer, "that he often kept as many as thirty separate tints on his palette at once and always used a separate brush for each. And he never would allow any one to move about in his studio, for fear of raising the dust and soiling his colours."

Credi's style, as might be expected, was closely derived from that of Verrocchio, whom he imitates in his defects as well as in his excellences, preserving his sharply defined outlines and transparent colour, and reproducing his fat babies, with their awkward limbs and turned-up toes. Here and there, the grace of his smiling faces and curly-headed cherubs, recalls Leonardo's types and reminds us of the great fellow-student who was only five years his senior. And although he never attained the exquisite suavity of Leonardo's smile or the ardent devotion of Perugino's saints, his works all breathe the same deep feeling and sincerity. One of his early works is the fine picture of an angel bringing the Sacrament to the penitent, "S. Maria Egyptiaca" at Berlin, which, like the Borghese Madonna, is painted in tempera. Another is the graceful little "Annunciation" in the Uffizi. Here both the youthful Virgin, looking round with uplifted hand, and the landscape background, strongly resemble Verrocchio's works. These park-like scenes, where clear streams wind among green lawns and avenues of trees with spreading branches throw long shadows on the grass, are a peculiar feature of Lorenzo's pictures, and make charming settings for his grave and gentle Saints. Another of his favourite subjects was the "Noli me Tangere," the Risen Christ with a spade in his hand walking in a lovely garden, while Magdalen kneels at his feet in adoration. Good examples of this subject are to be seen both in the Louvre and Uffizi.

Of this painter's larger pictures, the most important are the "Adoration of the Shepherds," in the Accademia delle belle Arti of Florence, and the enthroned "Madonna," originally painted for S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, but carried off to Paris in 1812, and now in the Louvre. This altar-piece, which is remarkable for its fine colour, and for the Leonardesque air of the youthful S. Giuliano, is described by Vasari as Lorenzo di Credi's best work. Both of these were painted before 1508, in which year they are mentioned by Albertini. In the latter years of his life, this master contented himself with repeating old subjects, and painting small devotional pictures, that were in great demand for the decoration of private houses and chapels.

Lorenzo remained in Florence all through the troubled years of Savonarola's revival and persecution, and, like most of his brother artists, was deeply moved by the Frate's sermons. He became a zealous *piagnone*, and is said to have destroyed all his studies of nude and pagan subjects in the Bonfire of Vanities. Certainly a Venus in the Uffizi, clearly a work of his early days, is the only subject of this kind, from his hand, that has ever come to light. He was closely associated with the *Piagnoni*, and lived on intimate terms with the artists who had been the most devoted followers of Fra Girolamo. For instance, he painted the portrait of Benivieni, the poet who wrote lauds and *canzoni* for the children of S. Marco, and together with Corniole, the engraver of the famous gem bearing Savonarola's head, witnessed the will of the architect Cronaca, on the 16th of September, 1508. In 1501, he restored an altarpiece by Fra Angelico in the Dominican convent at Fiesole; and in 1506, he was called in to settle a dispute between the Prior of S. Marco and a patron who had commanded Fra Bartolommeo to paint the "Vision of St. Bernard" for the Badia. In 1505, both he and Perugino were chosen to value the mosaics executed in the Duomo by David Ghirlandajo, and the *piagnone* miniature painter, Monte di Giovanni, who frequently introduces Savonarola's portrait in the illuminations with which he enriched the choir books of S. Marco or S. Maria Nuova. Finally, in 1531, being then past seventy, and caring more, as Vasari remarks, for a quiet

life than for honour or wealth, the aged painter retired to the hospital of S. Maria Nuova, an institution with which the *piagnoni* had always been closely associated, where Fra Bartolommeo had painted his "Last Judgment," and Gherardo, the brother of Monte di Giovanni, was organist. Here Lorenzo di Credi made his will, and after bequeathing legacies to the niece of his old master, Verrocchio, and a few others, gave up the rest of his fortune to the hospital, on condition of receiving a pension of 36 florins, which was to be continued after his death to his old servant, Monna Caterina. Here he spent the six last years of his life in peace and quietness, and died on the 12th of January, 1537.

FRA BARTOLOMMEO

1475–1517

THE same Dominican convent which had numbered Fra Angelico among its brothers, gave the world another painter in the days of the full Renaissance, a painter lacking, it is true, the intense fervour and spirituality of the angelic master, but who clothed his pure and reverent thoughts in noble and gracious forms and was reckoned among the foremost artists of his day. His father, Paolo del Fattorino, was a poor muleteer of Florence, who saved enough money to buy a house near the Porta San Pier Gattolini. Here his eldest son, a boy who became known as Baccio della Porta, was born in 1475, and by the advice of the sculptor Benedetto da Majano, was placed in the shop of Cosimo Rosselli. So trustworthy and intelligent was the child, that at nine years old he was already employed by his master not only to grind colours and sweep out the shop, but to receive payments. His charming nature soon won the hearts of all his comrades, and another apprentice who was only a few months older, Mariotto Albertinelli, became his inseparable companion. "The two," says Vasari, "were as one body and one soul." Yet the lads were very different in character and disposition. While Baccio loved to study Masaccio's frescoes in the quiet Chapel of the Carmine, Mariotto preferred the gay company of the youths who copied antiques in the Medici gardens, and when the preaching of Savonarola stirred all Florence, Baccio was daily to be seen among the crowds which flocked to hear the eloquent Friar, while Mariotto openly scoffed at the *piagnoni*, and attached himself to the opposite faction. Yet nothing could break the tie that bound the two young artists together, and when the death of Baccio's father left a young family of half-brothers dependent upon his exertions, he and Mariotto opened a shop on their own account.

Although a number of masterly pen-and-ink studies in different public and private collections bear witness to Baccio's facility of hand and brain, it is difficult to point with certainty to the pictures which he painted in these early years. But the delicate little panels of the "Nativity" and "Circumcision" in the Uffizi, a "Noli me Tangere" in the Louvre, and a fine panel of the Holy Family in the Visconti-Venostà Gallery at Milan, probably belong to this period. Here the colouring and landscape both recall the works of the painter Piero di Cosimo, who was foreman in

Rosselli's workshop, and evidently had a large share in forming Baccio's style. One other work of Baccio's youth has a touching significance, the portrait of Savonarola, the beloved teacher to whom he was so deeply attached and whose words made so deep an impression upon his gentle and thoughtful nature. This portrait, which gives the head of the great Friar in all its rugged grandeur, was long preserved in the Dominican Convent of Prato, and now hangs in Savonarola's cell at S. Marco, bearing the following inscription, which had been hidden in the days of persecution under a coat of oil-paint: *Hieronymi Ferrariensis missa a Deo, prophetæ effigies.* Baccio della Porta took a leading part in all the chief scenes of the revival. In common with other *piagnone* artists, carried away by the enthusiasm of the hour, he laid his pagan studies on the Bonfire of Vanities, and on the fatal night when the convent was stormed and the great Frate dragged by his cruel enemies to prison and torture, he fought among the defenders of S. Marco. The terrible events of those days, the death of Savonarola at the stake, and the utter failure of the cause which he had held to be that of Christ and Florence, fell upon the young painter with crushing force. For a time he struggled bravely on, and undertook a commission from Gerozzo Dini to paint a fresco of the Last Judgment in the Campo Santo of the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova. In the ruined fragments which still hang on the blackened walls of the old hospital, we see how he clung with despairing grasp to those eternal realities which, now his master's voice was silenced, were all that he had left to trust in. This grand conception of the Judge coming on the clouds of heaven to avenge his Saints, and of the great Archangel with drawn sword parting the blessed from the lost, was painted in this dark hour of his life. But in the mastery of form and technique which it reveals, in the imposing character of the design, this "Last Judgment" forms an important link between the old world and the new. On the one hand it takes us back to the mediæval conceptions of the painters of the Campo Santo of Pisa, on the other, it points onward to Raphael's "Disputa." But the task proved beyond Baccio's strength, and when the upper part was painted, he left his friend Albertinelli to finish the lower portion of the fresco, and on the 26th of July, 1500, took the vows of the Dominican Order in the Convent of Prato.

For the next four years, Fra Bartolommeo, as the new-made friar was now called, never touched a brush, and it was only at the entreaty of his Superior, the Prior of S. Marco, that in the autumn of 1504, he agreed to paint an altar-piece for the Badia. That year Raphael of Urbino came to Florence for the first time. He was deeply impressed by Fra Bartolommeo's "Last Judgment" and soon became intimate with the painter. "Raphael," writes Vasari, "was with Fra Bartolommeo continually." The friendship between the two masters was destined to bear rich fruit. Raphael studied the friar's fine modelling and masterly composition, imitated his "Last Judgment" in the fresco of S. Severo at Perugia, and even adopted his style of drawing in black chalk. And under the genial influence of the young Urbinate's companionship, Fra Bartolommeo felt his old love of art revive, and applied himself to painting with fresh ardour. The damaged fresco of the "Madonna and Child" in Marco, bearing as it does so close a resemblance to Raphael's "Madonna di Casa Tempi," and the lunette of Christ and his disciples on the way to Emmaus, were evidently painted about this time; perhaps too, the dainty little "Nativity" in a fair landscape, which the Prior

of S. Marco presented to the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, when he came to Florence in 1512, and which is now in the Mond collection.

In 1508, the year in which Raphael left Florence for Rome, Fra Bartolommeo paid a visit to Venice, and, on his return, painted his two finest altar-pieces, God the Father, adored by S. Mary Magdalen, S. Katharine of Siena, and the enthroned Madonna between S. Stephen and S. John the Baptist, in the Cathedral of Lucca. Both pictures are remarkable for rich colour and tender feeling, and reveal the knowledge of chiaroscuro which Fra Bartolommeo had acquired from the study of Leonardo's works. The Angels flying in the air, and holding a crown over the Virgin's head, are very similar to those introduced by Raphael in his unfinished "Madonna del Baldacchino," while the lovely cherub playing a lute on the steps of the throne, recalls Bellini's child-angels at Venice. In 1509, the year in which these masterpieces were finished, Fra Bartolommeo took his old friend Mariotto Albertinelli again into partnership. Now that Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael had all left Florence, the Friar was the foremost painter remaining, and found it impossible to execute all the commissions which he received. A formal agreement was drawn up between Albertinelli and the Prior of S. Marco, by which the convent was to provide the necessary materials, and the works produced were to be sold at the dissolution of the partnership, and all profits divided. The pictures which each master executed separately, are signed with the artist's name, while those which they painted together, bear a monogram consisting of a cross between two rings. For three years the two friends worked together in perfect harmony, and many well-known pictures issued from the convent-workshop. Among the pictures executed by Fra Bartolommeo during this period, were the beautiful "Holy Family" at Panshanger, and two large compositions of the "Marriage of St. Katharine," which are respectively in the Louvre and Pitti galleries. The first was originally placed in the convent church, but was given by the Signoria of Florence in 1511, to the French Ambassador, and the second, which bears the date 1512, was painted to take its place in S. Marco. The "Enthroned Madonna" of the Pitti (No. 208), bearing the inscription often seen on the friar's works, *Orate pro Pictore*, 1512, was also painted for the Church of S. Marco, in the same year. Another great altar-piece, in which the ten patron Saints of Florence were all to be introduced, was commenced in 1510, for the Council Hall, but like the paintings which Leonardo and Michaelangelo had designed with the same intention, it was never finished. At that moment the Medici had once more been expelled, and the old cries of Savonarola's days were heard again in the streets of Florence. Once more Christ was proclaimed King in Florence, and a great picture, in celebration of this event, was ordered by the Signoria for the Council Hall. Fra Bartolommeo accepted the task with joy, and sketched out the noble cartoon of the "Virgin and Saints pleading for the liberties of Florence," which is still preserved in the Uffizi. But before the picture was painted, the dream of liberty was over; the Medici returned once more, and Fra Bartolommeo's masterpiece was never completed.

In all these works the painter shows himself the true child of the Renaissance. The design is symmetrical and full of grandeur, the figures are admirably drawn and modelled, and the artist's skill in handling light and shade, and his accurate knowledge of the structure of the human frame, are plain. Fra Bartolommeo, indeed, paid especial attention to this last point, and is said to have been

the first to introduce the use of jointed lay-figures. But unfortunately, in his anxiety to rival Leonardo's effects, and attain the roundness of his forms, he employed printer's ink and bone black for the shadows, a practice which has been attended with disastrous results, and has ruined much of the lovely colour in his works. And still more unfortunately, Fra Bartolommeo fell into the mistake common to all Florentine artists of his day, of seeking to emulate Michelangelo's style, and sacrificed his own exquisite sense of beauty and symmetry, his instinctive grace and tender feeling, to this vain and futile endeavour. This mistaken effort to attain grandiose and statuesque forms, is especially evident in the works of Fra Bartolommeo's last period, from 1512 to 1517.

In January, 1512, owing in all probability to a change of Priors at S. Marco, the partnership with Albertinelli was dissolved and the sum of 425 gold florins, produced by the sale of the two masters' joint works, was divided between Mariotto and the convent. In 1514, Fra Bartolommeo went to Rome, where he stayed with Fra Mariano Fetti, at the Dominican convent of S. Silvestro, on Monte Cavallo, and met Raphael and Michelangelo once more. On his return, he painted his colossal "S. Mark" of the Pitti, a work evidently inspired by the sight of Buonarotti's prophets in the Sistina, a nude S. Sebastian, which excited scruples in the hearts of the Dominicans of S. Marco, who sold the picture to the French king's agent, Giovanni Battista della Palla. The Annunciation of the Louvre, and the S. Peter and S. Paul of the Quirinal, which the artist gave as a present to his host, Fra Mariano, were both painted in 1515. So was the "Madonna della Misericordia" at Lucca, with its lovely groups of women and children taking shelter under the blue mantle of the Virgin Mother. But in spite of his ceaseless activity, Fra Bartolommeo's health was rapidly failing. In October, 1515, a return of fever, which had driven him away from Rome the year before, made him seek rest and country air at Pian di Mugnone, where he painted several frescoes in the hospital attached to S. Marco. On his way back to Florence he visited his relatives at his father's native village of Suffignano, and while staying with these humble folk, received a pressing invitation from Francis I. to visit his court. But he was detained in Florence by work for his convent, and, in his failing health, may well have shrunk from the journey. That winter Leo X. came to Florence, and when the friars of S. Marco laid a request for the canonisation of Fra Angelico's friend, S. Antonino, before His Holiness, Fra Bartolommeo recorded the event by painting a little picture of the burial of the good Archbishop, which is now at Panshanger. Another gem of the same pure colour and miniature-like finish, is the "Holy Family" in the Corsini Gallery in Rome, which he finished in the same year for Angelo Doni, the patron of Raphael and Michelangelo. The large "Salvator Mundi" in the Pitti, and the prophets Isaiah and Job in the Uffizi, originally formed part of a large altar-piece that was ordered in 1516 by a wealthy Florentine merchant, Salvator Billi, for the Annunziata Church, and bought by the Medici in 1663. Both the fine "Presentation in the Temple" at Vienna, which hung for over two hundred years in the chapel of the novices at S. Marco, and the famous "Deposition" of the Pitti, the most popular of all Fra Bartolommeo's works, belong to the last year of his life. The shadow of the coming end may have served to heighten the reverent feeling and deep pathos which give this finely designed composition so high a place among the sacred

pictures of the sixteenth century, when art was already on the verge of decadence. On the 14th of June, 1517, the painter wrote to the Duke of Ferrara, sending him a picture of the Virgin and Saints, and a head of Christ for the Duchess, Lucrezia Borgia. He spent the summer months at Pian Mugnone, where he painted a last fresco of the Magdalen, but after his return to Florence, had another attack of fever which soon carried him off. He died on the 6th of October, at the age of forty-two, to the grief of the whole community, who lamented in him the last of the monastic painters.

MARIOTTO ALBERTINELLI

1474–1515

MARIOTTO ALBERTINELLI, the life-long friend and companion of Fra Bartolommeo, was born in Florence on the 13th of October, 1474, and after being apprenticed to a gold-beater for some years, entered Cosimo Rosselli's *atelier*. Here he first met Baccio della Porta, and formed the friendship which influenced his whole future. While his friend became a zealous *piagnone*, Mariotto openly proclaimed himself a partisan of the *Arrabbiati*, and received his first commissions from Madonna Alfonsina Orsini, the wife of Piero de' Medici. But in spite of this difference of opinion, Albertinelli lived with Baccio in his father's house near the gate of S. Pier Gattolini, and formed his style so entirely on that of his friend that it became difficult to distinguish the works of the two artists. Albertinelli was, as Vasari says, another Fra Bartolommeo. The portraits and other pictures which he painted for Alfonsina de' Medici, were sent by her to Rome, where they fell into Cæsar Borgia's hands and afterwards disappeared. A picture of the "Annunciation" in the Duomo at Volterra, and a lovely little triptych of the Virgin and Child between S. Barbara and S. Katharine, in the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum at Milan, are the only early works by his hand now in existence. This little picture, which bears the date 1500, was long ascribed to Fra Bartolommeo, and is marked by the same delicate finish as that painter's small diptych in the Uffizi. When Baccio della Porta joined the Dominican Order, Mariotto came to the help of his friend, who was distressed at the thought of breaking his contract with Gerozzo Dini, and finished his fresco of the "Last Judgment" at Santa Maria Nuova. He introduced portraits of the Spedalingo or Master of the Hospital, and of Fra Angelico among the blessed, and represented himself and his assistant, Bugiardini, among the dead, who are seen rising from their tombs. Albertinelli's reputation was greatly increased by the skill and care with which he discharged the task left him by his friend, and he now opened a shop in the Via Gualfonda, where, in 1503, he painted his best-known work, the famous "Visitation" of the Uffizi. A round of the "Madonna adoring the Child" in the Pitti, which bears evident marks of Lorenzo di Credi's influence, belongs to the same period, while a "Madonna" in the Louvre and the fine fresco of the "Crucifixion" in the Chapter-house of the Certosa of Val d' Ema, three miles

from Florence, were both painted in 1506. This work is executed in Fra Bartolommeo's style, but the figures of the Magdalen and S. John, as well as the angels who hover in the air to receive the blood from the Saviour's wounds, are distinctly Peruginesque in feeling. At the foot of the Cross we read the following inscription: *Mariotti Florentini opus, pro quo, patre, Deus orandus est, A.D.*, MCCCCCVI., *Mens. Sept.* Albertinelli's natural hatred of monks and friars, however, had been only strengthened by the loss of his friend Baccio, and the good Carthusians found him and his noisy band of associates very troublesome inmates. They played tricks on the poor brothers and secretly carried off the meagre pittance daily allotted to each member of the community, until in their anxiety to be rid of their tormentors, the Carthusians agreed to double the rations of the artists, if only they would finish their work as speedily as possibly, which accordingly was effected, Vasari says, not without much mirth and laughter.

During that year, Albertinelli seems to have renewed his old relations with Fra Bartolommeo, and entered into an agreement by which he took charge of the friar's half-brother Piero, a youth of feeble intellect and vicious propensities, who was a source of constant trouble to his brother. But, instead of learning painting, Piero was always escaping from Albertinelli's house and getting into mischief, and, in 1512, through the intervention of the Prior of S. Marco, Fra Bartolommeo's friend, Santi Pagnini, he was finally placed in the Hospital of the Innocents. In 1509, Albertinelli entered into partnership with Fra Bartolommeo, and worked as his chief assistant during the next three years, in the shop of S. Marco. As a rule the Friar seems to have supplied the designs of all the pictures which were painted by Albertinelli at this time. Three of the best of these, all bearing the date of 1510, an "Annunciation," a "Madonna and Saints," and a picture of the "Holy Trinity," are now in the Academy of Florence, while among the works which fell to his share in 1513, were an "Adam and Eve" and a "Sacrifice of Abraham," both of which are now at Castle Howard.

After the final dissolution of the partnership, Mariotto's indignation and disgust with friars and monks knew no bounds. He declared that he was sick of painting and would never touch a brush again. Accordingly, he married a wife named Antonia di Ugolino, whose father kept a wine-shop and himself opened a tavern near the gate of San Gallo, which Vasari describes as a *bellissima osteria*. Here, at least, the wayward artist declared, he would lead a gay and joyous life, free from the worry of perspective and anatomy, and would hear his customers praising his good wine, instead of blaming his bad drawing. But he soon grew tired of this new trade and went back to his old calling. In March, 1513, he accepted a commission to paint a coat of armorial bearings, adorned with the figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, for the Medici Palace, in honour of Leo the Tenth's accession to the papacy, and after Fra Bartolommeo's visit to Rome in 1514, was invited to paint an altar-piece in the Dominican Church of S. Silvestro. Here he fell ill and was brought home in a litter to Florence, where he died on the 5th of November, 1515. Fra Bartolommeo was in the country when the news of Albertinelli's illness reached him, but he hastened to his old friend's bedside and remained with him to the end. The painter of the "Visitation" was buried in the ancient church of S. Pietro Maggiore. He left a son who died very young, and of his many pupils Giuliano Bugiardini and Franciabigio, the friend of Andrea del Sarto, were the only ones who attained any distinction.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

1486–1531

ANDREA DEL SARTO, or Andrea d'Agnolo, as he generally signed himself, was the son of a tailor named Agnolo, and was born in Florence on the 17th of July, 1486. At the age of seven he entered a goldsmith's shop, but his decided bent for drawing induced his father to apprentice him to the painter, Piero di Cosimo. The influence of Leonardo and Michelangelo, however, exerted a more lasting effect upon his style, and he soon became known as the cleverest of the young artists who studied the great cartoons by these masters that were exhibited in 1506. In 1508 Andrea was enrolled as a member of the Painters' Guild, and together with his friend Franciabigio, opened a workshop in the Piazza del Grano.

In the following year, Fra Mariano, the sacristan of the Servi Brothers, recognising Andrea's rare talents, gladly availed himself of this opportunity to secure an artist of promise at a small cost, and engaged him to paint a series of frescoes in the Court of the Annunziata for ten florins a-piece. Franciabigio was also employed to paint a fresco of the "Marriage of the Virgin," and the two friends took up their abodes in the neighbouring building of the Sapienza, and devoted themselves to their new task. In these days the old Guilds of Painters were fast losing their religious character, and the Company of the Paiuolo or Cooking-Pot, to which Andrea and his associates belonged, is described by Vasari as a society of boon companions, whose meetings were spent in mirth and festivities of the gayest and most varied kind. But Andrea, at least, did not neglect his work. The five subjects from the life of S. Filippo Benizzi, the founder of the Servite Order, were completed by the end of 1510, and the painter was induced to add two more frescoes, a "Nativity" and "Adoration of the Magi" for an additional sum of forty-two florins.

These beautiful frescoes, executed by the young master when he was little over twenty, are familiar to all visitors to Florence. They are painted with the greatest lightness and animation, and at the same time with rare mastery of design and colour. The influence of Michelangelo is clearly seen in the modelling of the forms and flowing lines of the drapery, while that of Leonardo and Fra Bartolommeo is no less evident in the harmonious colouring and soft blending of tints. The fine and varied landscape in the fresco of the "Gamblers Struck by Lightning," recalls the style

of Piero di Cosimo, and the skill with which the actors in the scene are distributed over hill and valley, rivals Titian's art. The last subject from S. Filippo's life, "Children Healed by Touching the Saint's Clothes," is a lovely study of colour and light and shade; but the finest of the whole series is the "Birth of the Virgin," which was not completed until 1514. It is interesting to compare this subject with Ghirlandajo's well-known fresco in Santa Maria Novella, which Andrea evidently had in his mind at the time. The same motives of the mother receiving friends at her bedside, and of the maids washing the child in a basin by the fire, are reproduced, but the elegance of the woman, the Cupids on the mantelpiece and richly-carved frieze and cornices of the room belong to the art of a later day. Andrea's reputation was now firmly established. Commissions reached him from all quarters, and he became known in Florence as the faultless painter—Andrea *senz' errori*. The Medici honoured him with their patronage, and when, in 1515, Pope Leo X. visited Florence, Andrea was employed to plan the street decorations, which were on a splendid scale. With the help of his friend, the architect, Sansovino, he constructed a temporary façade for the Duomo, with chiaroscuro statues and reliefs, which excited the utmost admiration, and was pronounced by the Pope to be as fine as a marble front. The next important series which he executed were the ten chiaroscuro subjects from the life of the Baptist, divided by allegorical figures of the Virtues, in the cloisters of the Scalzo Confraternity. These were commenced in 1515, but only completed in 1526, after Andrea's return from France. Here several of the figures are borrowed directly from Albert Durer's engravings, but the lively and dramatic character of the composition is marred by the voluminous draperies with which the figures are loaded. The baneful effect of Michelangelo's influence is still more apparent in the otherwise beautiful lunette of the Madonna del Sacco, which he painted in 1525, in the cloisters of the Annunziata.

Besides these frescoes, Andrea del Sarto painted a large number of easel pictures for the churches and convents of Florence. The earliest, and one of the finest, is the Annunciation in the Pitti (No. 124), which he finished in 1512 for the Convent of S. Gallo. Here the timid action of the shrinking Virgin is finely rendered, and the splendid Renaissance portico in the background gives the familiar subject a new character. In the "Dispute on the Trinity," another picture executed for the monks of S. Gallo, now in the Pitti, the Saints grouped around S. Augustine, listening to his impassioned eloquence, are examples of Andrea's faultless drawing, combined with Venetian richness of colour. This masterpiece, together with the "Madonna delle Arpie," in the Tribune of the Uffizi, mark the height of Andrea's art. Both were painted before his memorable journey to France in 1518, and about the time of his marriage to Lucrezia del Fede, the wife who proved the evil genius of his life.

Vasari, who was himself at one time the pupil of Andrea and had a personal dislike to his wife, has painted Lucrezia in the blackest colours, but although his language may be exaggerated the main facts of his story have never been refuted. The beautiful woman, whose face appears not only in her husband's charming portraits but in almost every Madonna and Virgin-saint that he ever painted, was the wife of Carlo di Recanati, a hatter in the Via S. Gallo. Early in his life Andrea was fascinated by her charms and introduced her as one of the chief figures in his fresco of the

"Birth of the Virgin" in the outer court of the Annunziata. On the 17th of September, 1516, her husband died and Lucrezia soon afterwards became the painter's wife. But the fulfilment of his long-cherished wish brought Andrea no peace. Lucrezia's violent and overbearing temper drove away all his apprentices, amongst others his favourite scholar, Pontormo, who was still living when Vasari wrote. Her vanity attracted other admirers, whose presence excited the susceptible artist's jealousy, while her extravagance involved him in continual difficulties and, if Vasari's story is to be credited, led him to neglect his own parents, who died in miserable poverty. Yet Andrea's devotion to the woman he loved never wavered, and Lucrezia's charms and strength of will completely subdued his weak nature.

In the summer of 1518, he accepted a pressing invitation to the court of France, where two of his best pictures, the "Holy Family" of the Louvre and a "Pietà" now at Vienna, had been already sent. He found a generous patron in Francis I. for whom he painted the well-known "Charity" in the Louvre, and who was anxious to retain him permanently in his service. But Lucrezia became impatient in her husband's absence, and wrote letters urging him to return, "being more anxious," remarks Vasari, "to profit by his gains than to see him again." At length Andrea induced the king to give him leave of absence for two months, and returned to Florence, with a sum of money which Francis I. gave him to spend in buying works of art for his palace at Fontainebleau. But once at home again, Andrea seems to have lost all sense of honour and loyalty. He lavished presents upon Lucrezia and her sisters, and spent the king's gold in building himself a house, in a street at the back of the Annunziata, after which he was naturally too much afraid of that monarch's just anger to return to France. But he found work enough in Florence, where his fame stood higher than ever, and no artists of note were left to be his rivals. His old friends, the Servi friars and Scalzo brothers, welcomed him gladly and gave him new commissions. Ottaviano de' Medici, who had also been one of his first patrons, employed him to decorate Pope Leo the Tenth's villa at Poggio a Caiano, near Florence. There he painted a fresco of Cæsar receiving tribute, a gay and animated scene of envoys in Florentine costume bringing parrots, giraffes, and monkeys as offerings to the victor, with nothing Roman about it excepting the name. The work, however, was interrupted by the Pope's death, and Andrea left his fresco unfinished, and returned to work at his paintings in the Scalzo cloisters.

In 1524, during an outbreak of the plague in Florence, he painted his well-known "Deposition," in the Pitti, for the nuns of S. Piero, in Val Mugello, a masterpiece of drawing and colouring, but which falls far short of Perugino or Fra Bartolommeo's rendering of the subject in point of feeling and expression. The same lack of elevation and spiritual meaning strikes us still more forcibly in the "Last Supper," which Andrea painted, in 1526, for the Vallombrosan monks, in the refectory of their house at S. Salvi, outside the Porta della Croce. The heads of the Apostles are vigorous and animated; the colouring as usual is full of charm; but there is nothing ideal or noble about the Christ, and no attempt is made to realise the solemn meaning of the scene. As years went on, Andrea's style became more and more artificial. He painted one picture after another with increasing facility and corresponding mannerism of style. In such works as the "Virgin Saints at Pisa" and the "Holy Family" (No. 81 in the Pitti) we see the same

heavy draperies, the same fair women with gentle soulless faces, and the same stereotyped expression. Even his colouring lost its charm in a great measure, and the once masterly fusion of tints gave place to a curious greyness of tone. Where he still succeeded best was in small subjects of a decorative nature, such as the boy-angels of the altar-piece which he painted in 1528, for the hermitage on the rocky heights of Vallombrosa, or the scenes from the story of Joseph with which he adorned the *cassoni* of Margherita Borgherini's bridal chamber. And one of his most attractive works is the group of S. James caressing two children, wearing white hoods of the order, in the processional banner which he painted for the confraternity of S. Jacopo del Nicchio.

Andrea's portraits are remarkable for their truth and refinement. One admirable example is "The Sculptor," in the National Gallery, while nothing can be more charming than the picture of his wife, wearing a blue robe, and holding a volume of Petrarch open in her hand—now in the Uffizi ; or that at Berlin, where she appears as a handsome matron, wearing a striped bodice with yellow sleeves, and a white handkerchief loosely twisted among the coils of her chestnut hair. But it is melancholy to trace the gradual deterioration in his own portraits, from the graceful youth with the sensitive lips, dark eyes, and long brown curls, who meets us in the earlier ones, down to the coarse, middle-aged man of the Uffizi picture, which he painted in the last year of his life. Andrea's technical skill in this branch of art is strikingly displayed in the copy of Raphael's great portrait of Leo X. and his Cardinals, which he painted, in 1524, for Ottaviano de' Medici. Pope Clement VII., it appears, had desired his kinsman to send the famous Raphael, which hung over a door of the Medici Palace, as a present to Federigo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, upon which Ottaviano, naturally reluctant to part from so valued a possession, employed Andrea del Sarto to copy the picture, and sent his work to Mantua as the original. So admirable was Andrea's work that Giulio Romano, who had himself assisted Raphael in painting the original, was completely deceived until Vasari, many years later, betrayed the secret, and confessed that he had seen Andrea at work upon the copy.

In spite, however, of his untiring industry and of the great reputation which he enjoyed in Florence, Andrea del Sarto was neither wealthy nor prosperous, and never attained the position to which his talents entitled him. During the siege of Florence he suffered many privations, and was glad to accept a commission from the Signoria to paint the effigies of certain men—who were hung as traitors—on the walls of the Podestà, but was so ashamed of the task and fearful of consequences, that he executed the work behind a hoarding, and went to and fro by night. All through his later years, Vasari tells us, he never ceased to look back with regret to the time which he had spent in France, and he made more than one effort to recover Francis the First's favour. His "Boy-Baptist" of the Pitti was painted with this intention, but was ultimately bought by Ottaviano de' Medici. In 1529, however, the French king's Florentine agent, Giovanni Battista della Palla, eager to secure Andrea's services for his master, engaged him to paint a picture of the "Sacrifice of Isaac." In his anxiety to regain his old patron's good graces, Andrea exerted himself to the utmost, and the picture that he produced on this occasion is truer in feeling and finer in execution than any of his later works. Unfortunately the painting never reached its destination. Della Palla, who had taken an active part in the siege of Florence, was thrown into prison by the

Medici after their final triumph, and died there miserably ; and the " Sacrifice of Isaac " remained in Andrea's studio. After his death, his widow sold the picture to Filippo Strozzi, and the Medici afterwards placed it in the Tribune of the Uffizi. In 1640, it was exchanged for Correggio's " Riposo," and became the property of the Duke of Modena, with whose chief treasures it passed eventually into the Dresden Gallery.

Andrea himself fell ill soon after the siege, and died on January 22, 1531, forsaken even by his wife, who fled from his bedside in terror, lest her husband's illness might prove to be the plague. He was buried in the Church of the Annunziata, which he had adorned with many of his finest works. Lucrezia survived him nearly forty years, and only died in January, 1571. It is said that one day, when Jacopo de Empoli sat in the Court of the Annunziata, copying Andrea del Sarto's fresco of the Birth of the Virgin, an old woman, on her way to church, stopped at his side and pointed out the figure of the handsome young woman in the centre of the picture. That, she told him, was her portrait, and she herself was Lucrezia del Fede, the wife of the artist who had painted the fresco. She had vexed him in his lifetime, and neglected him on his death-bed, but after all it was still her pride to remember that she had been the wife of the famous painter, Andrea *senza errori.*

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI

1474–1564

MICHELANGELO, the last great Florentine artist of the Renaissance, was born at the castle of Caprese, in the Apennines, above Arezzo, on March 6, 1474. His father, Lodovico Buonarroti, who held the office of Podestà at the time, and belonged to a good old Florentine family, evidently opposed the boy's wish to become an artist, and only consented when he saw further remonstrance to be useless. At nineteen, Michelangelo entered Ghirlandajo's workshop, and his clever copies of antiques in the Medici gardens soon attracted the notice of the Magnificent Lorenzo, who took the boy into his house and brought him up with his own children. But in 1492 Lorenzo died, and the young sculptor went to Bologna, where he carved the kneeling angel on the Arca of S. Domenico. On his return to Florence, he made the Sleeping Cupid, which was sold by a dealer as an antique to Cardinal Riario, in Rome. The fraud was discovered, and the Cardinal invited Michelangelo to Rome, where he spent the next five years, and executed the beautiful marble Pietà in S. Peter's. In 1501, he came back to Florence, and carved the colossal statue of David, which was set up on the steps of the Palazzo pubblico. Before it was finished, orders for important works reached him from all sides. Hitherto he had been known almost exclusively as a sculptor, but he had never given up painting, and two panel pictures, the only genuine works of the kind in existence, belong to these early years. One is the fine unfinished "Entombment" in the National Gallery. The other, the "Holy Family," which he painted in 1504, for his friend, Angelo Doni, and which is now in the Tribune of the Uffizi. The authorship of the latter work has never been disputed, but many critics have thrown doubts on the genuineness of the "Entombment," which formerly belonged to Cardinal Fesch, and was only discovered, fifty years ago, in a dealer's shop in Rome. The modelling of the former, however, and a certain severity of grandeur in the composition, are clear proofs of its origin, and there can be little doubt that in this striking conception we have an early work of Michelangelo, executed, in all probability, before he left Florence for Rome. The gentle and simple figure of one of the Maries on the right recalls the types of Ghirlandajo's women, and reminds us that he was Michelangelo's first

teacher, while the noble form of the dead Christ bears a strong likeness to the marble Pietà in S. Peter's.

In 1504, Michelangelo was ordered to paint a fresco in the Council Hall of the Palazzo pubblico, opposite the one on which Leonardo was already engaged. The subject which he chose on this occasion was an incident in the war with Pisa, when a party of Florentine soldiers were surprised while bathing in the Arno, and victoriously repulsed the assailants. These groups of men, in every variety of attitude, some still sleeping on the ground, others climbing up the banks and running to arms, others again already engaged in a hand to hand fight, were exactly suited to Michelangelo's genius, and the mastery with which he accomplished the task excited general admiration. Cellini tells us that nothing in ancient or modern art has ever reached the same height of excellence, and declares the design to have surpassed the frescoes of the Sistina. Unfortunately, the fresco was never painted, and the cartoon, after hanging during many years in the Sala del Papa, where it was admired and studied by every artist of the day, was removed to the Medici Palace, and disappeared during the confusion which prevailed at the time of Giuliano de' Medici's death.

Early in 1505, Michelangelo was called to Rome by the newly-elected Pope Julius II., and entered on the second period of his career. During the remainder of his long life he laboured for a succession of imperious pontiffs, and wasted many of the best years of his existence in planning gigantic schemes that were never destined to be realised. First of all, he was employed to quarry marbles for the colossal monument of Julius II., an elaborate structure which was never completed. The Tragedy of the Tomb, as Condivi calls it, dragged on its weary course through forty years, and embittered Michelangelo's whole life. Then, at Julius II.'s bidding, he modelled the bronze statue of that Pontiff, which was placed over the great door of S. Petronio, at Bologna, and destroyed three years afterwards in a popular tumult. In March, 1508, the great sculptor came back to Rome, intending to work at the statues for the Tomb of Julius II., but the Pope ordered him to leave this work for the present, and paint the vault of the Sistine Chapel. In vain Michelangelo declared that painting was not his trade, and that Raphael was the proper man for the work. Julius II. would have his way, and in spite of many difficulties, the mighty task was accomplished in the space of four and a half years.

Michelangelo's letters during this time reveal a piteous tale of the petty troubles and vexations which he had to endure. His enemies were always plotting against him, his assistants and servants cheated and annoyed him in a hundred different ways. The Pope was absent from Rome, and left him ill-supplied with funds. At home his brothers were quarrelsome and wasteful, and treated their old father unkindly. Every one seemed to conspire to vex and thwart him. "I am living here in discontent," he wrote home in June, 1508; "never well, and undergoing great fatigues; without money or friends." And again, in July, 1512: "I am ill, and suffering greater hardships than ever man endured. Still, I put up with it all, if only I may reach the desired end." Six months later the whole work was completed, the last half of the vault was uncovered, and all Rome flocked to see the results of the great master's labours. That day Michelangelo's triumph was complete, and he wrote home to tell his old father that the Pope was entirely satisfied. The

work was, indeed, magnificent, alike in design and execution. On the central vault, the whole drama of Creation, of the Fall and Deluge was set forth in nine large compartments. On the spandrels at the corners, four subjects—the Brazen Serpent, the Triumph of Mordecai and Esther over Haman, David slaying Goliath, and Judith bearing the head of Holofernes—were represented as types of the redemption of the world. In the spaces between the windows, twelve Sibyls and Prophets were placed as witnesses of the coming of Christ, and the lunettes above were filled with family groups of the royal line of David. But the great master's labours did not end here. After unfolding the tale of the great Christian epic on the stone vault, he further adorned every angle, curve, and cornice with nude figures of youths and children, in every possible variety of attitude. And prominent among that marvellous array of living figures, he placed those twenty incomparable genii which reveal the noblest ideal of human form to which any modern painter has attained.

The frescoes of the Sistina were the grandest achievement of Michelangelo in painting. In them we see the fullest manifestation of his mighty creative faculties and splendid technical powers, and in them we also recognise the final and logical culmination of Florentine art. All that had gone before, the successive attempts of Giotto and Masaccio, of Donatello and Verrocchio, of Botticelli and Leonardo, to solve the different problems of form and movement, are gathered up here. When Pope Julius II. called him to paint the frescoes of the Sistina, he complained that painting was not his trade, and that, as he always maintained, sculpture was his true vocation, in proof of which he invariably signed himself Michelangelo, *scultore*. And there can be no doubt that the finest qualities in his painting, the purity of outline, the vigour of the modelling, the plastic poetry of the forms, were all borrowed from the sister art. More than this, he realised, what men such as Signorelli and Piero della Francesca had only dimly felt before, that the most complete rendering of life and movement can only be attained by means of the nude. And in the perfect types of strength and beauty, which look down from the vault of the Sistina, he succeeds in showing us a vision of humanity more glorious than had ever been held up before the world, since the great days of Greek sculpture.

Unfortunately, just at the moment of his fullest development, Michelangelo's powers were frittered away upon architectural and engineering schemes, which consumed the most precious years of his life. Four months after the completion of the Sistina frescoes, Julius II. died, and the new Pope, Leo X., summoned Michelangelo to Florence to erect a façade for the church of S. Lorenzo. In spite of his repeated protests that architecture was not his profession, the great master threw himself, with his usual energy, into the work, and wrote from Carrara, where he was engaged in quarrying marbles, that he hoped to produce the finest thing that Italy had ever seen. But, in 1520, the Pope suddenly cancelled the contract, and abandoned the scheme, to the bitter indignation of the master, who saw the labours of the last three years all thrown away. The next Medici Pope, Clement VII., employed him to adorn the tombs of his kinsmen in S. Lorenzo; and in those immortal allegories of sleep and waking, of day and night, the great sculptor gave utterance to the eternal regrets of his soul, and to the grief and shame which he felt for the captivity of Florence. But Michelangelo's further plans for the decoration of the Medici Chapel were never carried out, and in 1534, he returned to Rome, where the last thirty years of his life were spent.

Paul III., who succeeded Clement VII. two months afterwards, appointed him chief architect, sculptor, and painter at the Vatican, and at his command, Michelangelo painted the Last Judgment on the wall above the altar of the Sistine Chapel. This celebrated fresco was uncovered on Christmas Day, 1541, and the fame of Michelangelo's latest work spread through all Italy. But wonderful as are the feats of drawing, consummate as is the mastery of anatomy here revealed, the Last Judgment falls far below the frescoes of the ceiling. The terrors of the final doom, the denunciation which Savonarola hurled at unrepentant tyrants and sinners, are embodied in this avenging Christ, with the arm upraised to smite, but the painter has missed the pathos of the Dies Iræ, that strain of hope and mercy which breathes in the mediæval hymn and which had inspired the old Florentine pictures of death and judgment. The theme was little suited to Michelangelo's genius, and the work bears unmistakable signs of weariness and discontent. The living fire that animates each face and form of the countless host above, is lacking here. The painter's science has become more barren, and his types are cold and lifeless. The same defects strike us still more forcibly in the frescoes of the Conversion of S. Paul and the Martyrdom of S. Peter, which Michelangelo painted in the Capella Paolina, by order of Paul III. The decay of power is evident, the faces are dull and unexpressive, the figures, in spite of their violent attitudes, are wanting in life and movement. But we must remember that when Michelangelo finished these frescoes, he was seventy-five years of age, and, as he told Vasari, "fresco painting was in truth no fit work for old men."

The last years of the great master's life were devoted to architectural works. In 1547, he was appointed chief architect of S. Peter's, and held this office during the reigns of five successive Popes, without accepting any salary. But after his death the building was entirely remodelled. A Latin cross was substituted for the Greek one, and Bernini's huge façade was allowed to destroy the effects of the cupola, which had been constructed from his model, and which is almost the only part of S. Peter's that was completed according to his design. To the last his brain was busy with great schemes. The reconstruction of the Capitol and the completion of the Farnese Palace were among the labours of his closing years. But he had outlived the great generation to which he belonged, and found himself left alone in an age of decreasing decay and feebleness.

From his youth, Michelangelo's life had been full of trouble. As a boy, his sharp tongue and hot temper often led to quarrels with his fellow students, and he bore traces of the blow on his nose, which he had received from one of his comrades, to the end of his days. In later life the same violent and morose temper naturally made him enemies. The independence of his character and the indignation with which he resented opposition and hindrances, found vent in bitter and scornful language. "You make yourself terrible even to Popes," wrote his friend Sebastiano del Piombo, quoting an expression which Leo X. had employed. In his old age, his constitutional melancholy and nervous susceptibility increased; he became moody and irritable, and was often unjust to his friends. The tragic fate which attended so many of his greatest works saddened his life and clouded his last days with gloom and failure. The distress which he suffered from the disappointment of his hopes and the bad faith of his employers, found vent in bitter lamentations. "My whole youth and manhood have been lost," he writes in one letter. "Painting and sculpture, labour and good faith, have been my ruin, and I go continually from

bad to worse. Better would it have been for me if I had been taught to make matches." But his friendship with Vittoria Colonna threw a ray of light over his sorrowful old age. This illustrious lady shared the deepest feelings of the great artist, who loved Savonarola's sermons in his youth, and remembered them to his dying day. Together they talked of poetry and painting, of God and the soul. He wrote sonnets and designed crucifixions and Pietàs for her use. After her death, the religious feelings which intercourse with her had deepened, found expression in the countless drawings of these subjects, many of them marked by striking power and beauty, which are still to be seen in public and private collections. The great picture that he evidently had in his mind was never executed, but his idea was partly realised in the unfinished marble Pietà behind the high altar in the Duomo of Florence, which he originally intended for his own tomb. And the pathetic sonnet which he sent to Vasari, when he was past eighty, is the last and most sublime expression of the tired soul, in the act of turning back to God.

"Nè pinger nè scolpir fia più che queti,
L'anima volta a quell' Amor Divino,
Ch'aperse a prender noi in croce le braccia."

On the evening of February 18, 1664, about the hour of the Ave Maria, the last of the great masters passed quietly away, begging his friends with his dying breath to "remember the sufferings of Jesus Christ." He was buried in Santa Croce of Florence, and the tasteless monument over his grave, designed by Vasari, bore witness to the decadence of art which Michelangelo had lived to see.

GENTILE DA FABRIANO

1370–1428

THE term of Umbrian school is commonly applied to the artists in that district of Central Italy, which lies between the upper valley of the Tiber and the Adriatic coast, and includes the ancient Etruscan cities of Cortona and Arezzo. As in olden times, the Umbrians and Etruscans had always been intimately related, so in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was a close connection between the painters of Umbria and Tuscany. The same artistic tastes which made Florence foremost among Italian cities, in the development of painting, bore fruit in the various local schools, which sprang up in the towns and villages of the Umbrian Apennines, and the March of Ancona. Early in the fourteenth century, Gubbio was a flourishing centre of art, and the artist Oderisio is mentioned by Dante as being not the glory of Gubbio alone, but the first miniature painter of his day. Towards the close of the fourteenth century, the fresco-painter, Ottaviano Nelli, upheld the traditions of art in Gubbio, while a master of the town of Fabriano, Allegretto Nuzi by name, was the head of another school in the Marches, and appears in the roll of Florentine artists in 1346.

But the chief representative of this primitive Umbrian art was his pupil, Gentile da Fabriano, whose fame soon spread beyond the narrow limits of his native province. The exact date of Gentile's birth is unknown, but must probably be fixed soon after 1370, since by the end of the century he was already an artist of considerable repute. After painting at Fabriano, Gubbio, Urbino, and Perugia, his fame brought him a summons to Venice, about the year 1410. Here he and the gifted Veronese master, Vittore Pisanello, adorned the great hall of the Ducal Palace with frescoes, and a battle-piece, which Gentile painted, representing the defeat of Frederic Barbarossa by the Venetians, excited general admiration. His presence gave a new impulse to art in the city of the lagoons, and at least one young painter of note, Jacopo Bellini, entered his workshop. In 1414, Gentile, whose paintings in the Sala del Consiglio were finished by this time, was invited to Brescia by Pandolfo Malatesta, and painted a chapel in the old Broletto, which was greatly admired by Pope Martin V. when he visited the Court of the Malatesta princes, on his return from the Council of Constance, in October, 1418. Before he left Brescia, the Pope obtained a

promise from the artist to follow him to Florence, where he had taken up his abode for the time, as soon as he had completed the frescoes upon which he was engaged. A curious letter has lately been discovered, in which Gentile asks Malatesta for a safe conduct and escort of eight horses and servants, in order that he might travel to Florence to join the Pope. Accordingly, towards the close of 1419, the painter moved to Florence and settled there in a workshop in the parish of the Trinità. In 1423, he had moved into the quarter of S. Maria Ugonis, and was living in a house containing sculptures and paintings of great worth which he had collected. That summer, on the Feast of S. Barnabas, his assistant, the Venetian, Jacopo Bellini, who had accompanied him to Florence, managed to get into trouble, and was summoned before the magistrates to answer to a charge of striking one of the citizens, and was imprisoned for a time, and bound over to keep the peace. On this occasion, Jacopo Bellini is described as "*olim famulo magistris Gentilum pittore de Fabriano*," and his eldest child was named Gentile, after his Umbrian master. Gentile da Fabriano's own name appears in the registers of the Confraternity of S. Luke, in Florence, in 1421, and on the roll of the Guild of Painters, on the 21st of November, 1422. In 1423, he painted his masterpiece, the famous Adoration of the Kings in the Trinità church, and in May, 1425, he finished another altar-piece for the church of S. Niccolò, by order of the Quaratesi family, one of whom held the office of Gonfaloniere in 1419, and received the golden rose from Gentile's patron, Pope Martin V. The wings of this picture are in the Uffizi, and a Madonna and Saints, originally executed for his native town of Fabriano, is now in the Brera, at Milan.

All of these works, but more especially the great Adoration in the Belle Arti, are marked by the same bright gay colouring and profusion of ornament, and the same mystic feeling which is so characteristic a feature of Umbrian art. The artist uses gilt relief lavishly to heighten the decorative effect of his pictures, and the crowns and robes of the Magi are richly adorned with embossed and incised gold work. In actual drawing and technique it must be confessed Gentile remained far behind his Florentine contemporaries. He learnt little from Uccello or Masaccio, and lacked Fra Angelico's powers of expression. But there is a softness and prettiness in his faces, and a wealth of decorative fancy in their surroundings, which make his pictures very attractive. His youthful forms are full of knightly grace, while the union of childlike simplicity with romantic splendour has all the charm of an old fairy tale. And, together with this natural sense of gay and joyous life, we see a new and genuine delight in the beauty of earth. The landscape of his paintings is varied and picturesque. White daisies, blue forget-me-nots, and red anemones shine like stars in the grass of the meadow, where the Three Kings kneel before the Christ-Child, and the clover and other wild flowers in the foreground of the Brera altar-piece, are painted with the most delicate truth and accuracy. A little painting of the "Flight into Egypt," which originally formed part of the predella attached to his great altar-piece in the Accademia, is probably one of the first attempts to paint a sunset sky. The sun itself, a ball of burnished gold, is seen dropping behind the mountains. The dark foliage of the orange trees and the bare hills are touched with gold, while the towers of a distant city glitter in the evening light, and the olive boughs cast long shadows on the newly turned furrows of a ploughed field in the foreground.

Unfortunately little remains of this charming painter's work. During his residence in Florence,

he visited Siena, Pisa, and Orvieto, where he painted a fresco of the Virgin in the Duomo. In 1426, he left Florence, and followed Pope Martin V. to Rome. This pontiff gave him a salary of 300 florins, and employed him to paint those famous frescoes on the life of the Baptist in S. John Lateran, which made Roger Van der Weyden say that Gentile da Fabriano was the most excellent master in Italy. And Michelangelo, in whose time they were still in existence, used to say that Gentile's style was as gentle as his name, "*aveva la mano simile al nome.*"

The Umbrian master also painted portraits of the Pope and ten of his Cardinals in the Lateran, as well as an altar-piece in the church of Santa Francesca Romana, both of which were still in existence in the sixteenth century, but have since disappeared. In the midst of these labours, and at the height of fame and prosperity, Gentile died. We know that his frescoes in S. John Lateran were finished in July, 1427, but the only notice we have of his death is a paper in the archives of Fabriano, dated November 22, 1428, by which Maddalena, daughter of Ser Egidio of Fabriano, makes a declaration that she has inherited the property of her relative, Messer Gentile, the painter, who had lately died in Rome.

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

1420–1492

VASARI'S biographies of painters who were not of Tuscan birth are seldom accurate, but his account of Piero della Francesca is even more full of mistakes than usual. He tells us that Piero was born after his father's death, and was called della Francesca after his mother. Both these statements are altogether false. His father, Benedetto dei Franceschi, was a wool-merchant who belonged to a well-known family whose descendants still live at Borgo S. Sepolcro, married a girl of the place, named Romana di Perino, in the year 1416, and was still living in the middle of the century. Piero dei Franceschi, as the painter is rightly called by his friend and scholar, the learned mathematician, Fra Luca Pacioli, was born about 1420, at Borgo San Sepolcro, a small mountain-town east of Arezzo, in the upper valley of the Tiber. In 1439, he was working with Domenico Veneziano at the frescoes of the chapel of S. Egidio, in the ancient Florentine hospital of S. Maria Nuova, and was probably at Perugia the year before, when Domenico was employed to decorate a hall in Casa Baglioni. According to Vasari, Piero accompanied his master to the sanctuary of Loreto, but both artists were driven away, before they had time to finish their paintings, by a sudden outbreak of the plague. No trace of these works remains, but the influence of Domenico is apparent in the folds of the draperies, the shape of the eyes, and in the individual character of Piero's heads. From this first master, the young Umbrian also acquired the knowledge of oil-painting. He was, says Fra Luca, in the habit of mixing oil with his tempera, *olio e gaazzo*, and in a contract which Piero made in 1466, with the confraternity of the Nunziata at Arezzo, it is expressly stated that his picture is to be painted in fine colours and oils. As a boy, Piero had been an ardent student of mathematics, and the scientific bent of his genius was powerfully attracted by the school of Florentine naturalists. During his residence in Florence, he rapidly assimilated all the different improvements which Tuscan masters had recently made in anatomy, perspective, and chiaroscuro, in the representation of movement and knowledge of the human form.

On his return to Borgo S. Sepolcro, in 1445, he painted a panel of Our Lady of Mercy folding the faithful under her mantle, which is still to be seen in the hospital of his native city.

But his fame had already spread beyond the borders of Umbria, and during the next twenty years he travelled all over central Italy to execute commissions for different princes. Nothing is left of the frescoes which Vasari and Fra Luca Pacioli tell us he painted at Bologna, Pesaro, Ancona, and in Duke Borso's palace of Schifanoia, at Ferrara. Only one, which he finished in 1451, is still to be seen at Rimini, with Sigismondo Malatesta kneeling, between two black and white dogs, at the feet of his patron saint. Both of the frescoes which he painted in the Vatican for Pope Nicholas V. were destroyed to make room for Raphael's works, and one of these, "The Vision of Constantine," which he afterwards repeated at Arezzo, is supposed to have suggested the striking effect of light which the master of Urbino introduced in his "Deliverance of S. Peter from Prison."

The only frescoes which remain to give us some idea of this great Umbrian master's powers, are the subjects from the Legend of the Holy Cross, which Piero painted, soon after 1460, in the church of S. Francesco of Arezzo. Here the finest qualities of his art, his accurate knowledge of the human form, his close observation of natural facts, and careful study of the antique, are all displayed. The peculiar type of countenance which he adopts cannot be called beautiful, but the dignity of his forms and the portrait-like character of the heads are undeniable. Both the classical architecture which he introduces, and the costumes and armour of his personages are carefully studied, the movement of the figures is full of life, and the shape and action of the horses are given with unusual correctness. Especially remarkable is the fine effect in "The Vision of Constantine," where the foreshortened angel descends suddenly into the tent of the sleeping Emperor, and the light streams over the guards who keep watch at his bedside. The same solemn grandeur marks the "Annunciation" in the same series, and is still more strikingly revealed in the fresco of the "Resurrection" which adorns the ancient palace of the Conservatori, at Borgo S. Sepolcro. Christ, robed in a red mantle and bearing the flag of victory in his hand, while the winding-sheet still clings to His form, stands with one foot on the altar-tomb, in the act of rising from the grave. In the front of the picture the guards, overcome with heavy sleep, lie on the ground; in the distance, the towers of Borgo are seen rising on the rugged Apennine heights, and rosy clouds of sunrise float in the sky, above a tall row of cypresses. The same hilly landscape, dotted over with trees, the same careful drawing of boughs and leaves, is seen in the two pictures which the National Gallery is fortunate to possess from the hand of this rare master. One is the "Nativity," here reproduced; the other was painted for a church at Borgo S. Sepolcro, and represents the Baptism of Christ. Here the different foliage of the pomegranate, fig-tree, and cypress is carefully distinguished, and the foreshortened figure of Christ, standing in the midst of the stream, the three beautiful angels crowned with rose-garlands on the banks of Jordan, and the man pulling off his shirt, are admirable examples of Piero's vigorous and original style.

In 1469, Piero visited Urbino to paint a picture for the Guild of Corpus Domini, and was the guest of Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, who mentions him in his chronicle among the foremost masters of the day. A small "Scourging of Christ," remarkable for the fine portraits and stately Renaissance portico which it contains, is the only one of his works now left in Urbino;

but the noble portraits of Duke Federigo and his wife Battista Sforza, in the Uffizi, must have been painted about this time, as the young Duchess died in 1472. These two striking profiles—the Duke with his hooked nose and short crisp locks, the Duchess with her dull placid face, pearl-brocades and frilled head-dress, are masterly examples of this new branch of painting which was then its infancy, and mark an important step in the development of Renaissance art. In the background we have the same steep hills, with sparse trees, low walls, and quaint-shaped boats sailing on a winding river; while the back of the panels is decorated with allegorical representations of the Duke and Duchess, seated on triumphal cars drawn by horses and unicorns, and attended by Loves and Virtues.

The court of Urbino was in those days the centre of art and learning, and a master of Piero's distinction was sure of a welcome from Duke Federigo. In the dedication of his work on mathematics to Guidobaldi, the son and successor of Federigo, Luca Pacioli speaks of Pietro dei Franceschi as "that monarch of painting in our time, and most devoted servant of your princely house;" a phrase which seems to imply that the painter was connected with Urbino under both of these Dukes. This is confirmed by the fact that a copy of the original MS. of Piero della Francesca's "Treatise on Perspective," with a dedication to Duke Guidobaldo, is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale. This famous work, which was highly prized by his contemporaries and showed a knowledge of the subject far in advance of his time, was evidently written in the last years of Piero's life, probably when he was living at the court of Urbino. But the painter did not forget his native town on the Apennine heights, and he came back to end his days in the old home. In 1478, he painted another fresco for the brotherhood which had employed him thirty-three years before, and when, nine years later, he made his will, he is described as *sanus mente, intellectu et corpore*, so that the blindness of which Vasari speaks could only have afflicted him in his last days. He lived five years longer, and an entry in the archives of Borgo S. Sepolcro records the burial of Maestro Pietro di Benedetto dei Franceschi, *pittore famoso*, in the Badia, on October 12, 1492. He left a great name behind him, and the influence that he exercised on his generation was probably of more value than his actual achievement. The position which Piero holds in Italian art is one of great interest and importance. On the one hand he is linked with Masaccio, Paolo Uccello, and other early masters of the fifteenth century, while on the other he is connected with the painters of the full Renaissance. His scholar, Luca Pacioli, became the friend and companion of Leonardo, a master who coupled the same passion for science with a still higher degree of imaginative faculty. And his friendship with Giovanni Santi and the memories of his presence in Urbino were not without effect on the youthful Raphael, and prepared him to take the great Umbrian master of the last generation for his model in the Vatican Stanze.

LUCA SIGNORELLI

1441–1523

LUCA DI EGIDIO DI VENTURA SIGNORELLI was born in the year 1441, at Cortona, the ancient Etruscan city on the heights above Lake Thrasymene. Vasari, whose father was a kinsman of this painter, tells us that Luca spent his boyhood at Arezzo, in the house of his uncle Lazzaro Vasari, and studied drawing under Piero dei Franceschi. From the great master of Borgo he acquired a knowledge of perspective, and learnt to draw from the nude correctly, a study which he afterwards perfected in Florence, where he spent some years, and was strongly influenced by painters and sculptors such as Ghiberti and the Pollaiuoli. Like his master Piero, Luca of Cortona had far more in common with the Florentine than with the Umbrian school. He was comparatively indifferent to the charm of colour or to problems of light and shade. His whole attention was concentrated on one object—the study of the human form. He pursued his experiments in this direction with a boldness and energy which made him the worthy precursor of Buonarroti. "Even Michelangelo," says Vasari, "imitated the manner of Luca, as every one can see." But it was not till late in life that his genius attained full development, and that he found a theme congenial to his taste, and a sphere wide enough for the display of his powers.

His first works were altar-pieces for the churches of Cortona, Arezzo, and the neighbouring cities. Soon after 1476, he was employed by the Pope's nephew, Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, to paint a series of frescoes in the sacristy of the Duomo of Loreto. This led him to visit Rome with the other Florentine and Umbrian masters who were invited by Pope Sixtus IV. to decorate his new chapel in the Vatican. Here, between 1482 and 1484, Luca Signorelli painted the last fresco of the history of Moses. The great law-giver is represented looking out over the promised land from the top of Nebo, giving his staff to Joshua, and taking leave of the children of Israel, while his burial takes place in the presence of a goodly multitude of spectators in full Renaissance costumes. This fresco bears strong marks of Florentine influence, but is less individual than Signorelli's later works.

In 1484, the painter was back at Cortona, where he held several public offices and served

repeatedly as councillor and prior. Soon afterwards he went to Florence, where he painted two pictures for Lorenzo dei Medici. One of these is the fine round of the Holy Family, in the Uffizi, formerly at the villa of Castello, a work which is chiefly remarkable for the nude shepherds introduced in the background, and the decorative use which the painter here makes of the human form. The other is described by Vasari as "a picture of undraped gods that won him great praise," under which title we recognise the fine but much-repainted work of the School of Pan, at Berlin. The nude forms are admirably modelled, but there is no connection between the different figures, and the whole is wanting in unity and interest, and shows how completely Signorelli lacked that feeling for antique art which Mantegna possessed in so rare a degree. To the same Florentine period we may ascribe the noble portrait, also at Berlin, of a man in a red cap, with a triumphal arch in the background, and a group of the nude figures which he frequently introduces in his sacred subjects.

In 1497, Luca painted eight frescoes from the life of S. Benedict, in the cloisters of the convent of Monte Oliveto, near Siena. Most of these are now in a ruinous condition, and the crowd of figures introduced in the different subjects spoils the general effect, but the two last, in which S. Benedict is brought before Totila, King of the Goths, display considerable energy and power. Another group of antique subjects in the palace of Pandolfo Petrucci, has also been ascribed to Signorelli, but, to judge from the specimens of the series now in the National Gallery, they were probably executed by his assistant Genga.

In 1499, Signorelli was invited to Orvieto. The Board of Works of the Duomo, after waiting nine years in vain for Perugino, and making advances to Pinturicchio, finally decided to employ Luca, who consented to finish the decoration of the chapel, begun by Fra Angelico fifty years before. By a contract signed on April 5, 1499, the Cortona master agreed to complete the frescoes of Prophets and Patriarchs, on the vault, for the sum of 180 ducats, the Board of Works defraying the expense of the scaffolding, and supplying the gold and ultramarine required, as well as giving him a lodging with two beds. The work was completed by the following spring, to the satisfaction of Luca's employers, who now engaged him to adorn the walls of the chapel with frescoes of his own invention. For this vast work he was to receive 579 ducats, as well as two quarters of corn every month, twelve ass-loads of must at each vintage, and be supplied with lodgings for himself and his assistants. Although close upon sixty years of age, the painter had lost none of the ardour of youth, and in these frescoes on the walls of Orvieto, he has set forth the story of the last things with a fire and energy that surpass all earlier representations of the subject.

First we have the Preaching of Antichrist, a theme seldom introduced in Italian art, and which is the most original and perhaps the finest of the whole series. All Signorelli's mastery of human form, all his powers of individual expression are revealed in the groups of listeners assembled to hear the false prophet's seductive voice. The gay youth in splendid attire, resting his hand on his hip with an air of careless indifference; the shrewd face of the old man with tightly set lips and hard cunning look; the young mother who has eyes for no one but the child she clasps in her arms, are living types of the men and women whom he saw around him. Each separate episode is rendered with a vivid reality and at the same time with a solemn and impressive grandeur

worthy of the subject. Further on the terrors of the day of doom are unfolded before our eyes. We see Antichrist hurled into the abyss, the sun and moon darkened, and the stars falling from heaven; we see dead men staggering out of their graves, wretched sinners huddled together in their despair or flying before the avenging angels, who are the ministers of the wrath of God, while grinning harpies and bat-winged fiends carry off lost souls to hell. And in the midst of all this horror and confusion we see the glorious forms of the great archangels, who stand on the clouds of heaven and blow mightily the trump of doom. Nor is the joy of heaven less vividly rendered. Signorelli's conception of heaven forms a complete contrast to the green pastures and still waters of Fra Angelico's paradise. With him all is life and movement, fulness of strength, and superhuman energy. His angels are strong-limbed beings, with long yellow locks streaming on the wind, and spreading wings rustling through the air. There is a royal grace in their every motion as they dance upon the clouds, luting and harping as they go, or bend down from highest heaven to crown the waking souls who, as yet hardly conscious of their bliss, look up with trembling wonder at the vision breaking upon their eyes. The ideas of men, we feel, have undergone a change, and the mediæval dream of seraphic calm has faded away before the Titanic energy and sense of joy in conflict and struggle that was the dominant note of the new age.

In these last scenes a vast number of nude figures are introduced in every kind of attitude, stirred and animated with the most varied passions. Here and there the vehement energy of the painter leads him into undue exaggeration, and we are conscious of a lack of grace and style. The deficiencies of his colouring are evident, and the red tones of his flesh-tints strike us as harsh and unpleasant. But the forms are drawn with a correctness and vigour only excelled by Michelangelo who, as Vasari informs us, was never tired of praising these works of his Umbrian forerunner, and who certainly imitated them to a certain extent in his own "Last Judgment."

The lower part of the chapel walls under these great frescoes was adorned by Signorelli with mythological subjects painted in chiaroscuro, and taken from the Iliad, Æneid, Pharsalia, and Metamorphoses, together with medallions of Dante, Virgil, and other classic and mediæval poets who sang of the realm of heaven and hell. These are framed in arabesque ornaments, freely interspersed with sirens, dolphins, and nude figures, and the whole is a striking example of Luca's decorative skill. In "The Preaching of Antichrist" we recognise the portrait of the master himself; that splendid-looking personage with the fair hair and blue eyes, who always wore silk raiment, and whose gracious and courteous manners made so deep an impression on the boy Vasari. And there too, standing by his side, in his monastic habit, is the saintly Dominican painter, Fra Angelico of Fiesole, whose work at Orvieto Luca had been called to finish.

The frescoes of the Duomo of Orvieto were finished by the end of 1504. During the four years and a half which Signorelli had devoted to this great work, he had paid repeated visits to Cortona, where he had again been elected Prior, and where he painted the noble "Deposition," in the Duomo, in 1502. That year was a dark one for the painter; Cæsar Borgia had invaded Umbria, bringing war and pestilence in his track, and besides these public calamities Luca suffered a heavy domestic loss in the death of his beloved son Antonio, a youth of great beauty and promise. His father, Vasari tells us, in spite of his excessive grief, caused the dead body of the young man to

be laid out before him and, without shedding a tear, painted him as he lay there in his last sleep, saying that in this way he would at least keep before his eyes the image of the son whom Nature had given him, and of whom envious Fate had bereft him.

In 1588, Signorelli was invited to Rome by his old patron, Cardinal della Rovere—now Pope Julius II.—to take part in the decoration of the Vatican Stanze. Here he is mentioned, together with Perugino and Pinturicchio, among the guests of the architect Bramante, and must have met the young Raphael, who was eventually chosen to execute the whole work. Four years later, on the accession of Pope Leo X., the aged master, then seventy-two years old, once more visited Rome and saw the wonders of Raphael and Michelangelo's art in the Vatican. On this occasion he excited the wrath of Michelangelo by neglecting to repay a small sum which he borrowed from him, a wrong which the irascible sculptor resented by writing an indignant letter on the subject, five years later, to the chief magistrate of Cortona.

But although, like Perugino and other masters of note, Signorelli lived to see himself superseded by younger painters, he still enjoyed great reputation in his own city, and was in no lack of employment. On the contrary he painted altar-pieces, most of which are still in existence, for the convents and churches of Cortona and the neighbourhood. In these works the aged master strove with his old energy to imitate the more modern style of his younger rivals, and the influence of Fra Bartolommeo and Raphael is shown both in his composition and colour. This is especially the case in the altar-piece of the "Trinity," now in the Academy of Florence, where the archangels on either side of the Virgin's throne are models of manly beauty, and in the grandly conceived and finely painted "Madonna and Saints," which he executed in 1520, for a confraternity at Arezzo. On this occasion the members of the confraternity came to meet the venerable master, and bore him upon their shoulders all the way to Arezzo. Here Luca stayed in the house of his kinsman, Antonio Vasari, whose son Giorgio, then a child of eight, always remembered the kindness which the old master had shown him, and the advice which he gave his father to have the boy taught drawing, since whatever profession he followed a knowledge of art was useful to every *galantuomo*. The altar-piece was triumphantly placed in the chapel for which it was destined, and Signorelli was escorted home by a large company, of friends and relatives. To the last he painted with the same vigour and activity, saying that he was accustomed to work and did not know how to be idle. In June, 1523, he undertook the execution of an altar-piece for the chapel of the Council Hall at Cortona, and began a fresco in Cardinal Passerini's new palace, outside the gates of the city. But in October he fell ill, and died in the last days of November, full of years and honour. And to this day the peasants of Cortona remember his name; and the children that you meet in the quiet streets of the old Etruscan city, still speak of the great painter who died more than three hundred years ago, as "our Luca."

PIETRO PERUGINO

1446–1523

THE mystic poetry which was from the first the leading note of Umbrian art attained its highest perfection, towards the close of the fifteenth century, in the work of Pietro Perugino. This great master, who set the seal of technical completeness upon the devotional art of an earlier age, was born in 1446, at Città della Pieve, a little town in the mountains near Perugia. One of a large and struggling family, Pietro Vannucci was sent at nine years old to Perugia to learn painting, probably in the shop of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, the master with whose style his early works show the closest affinity, and afterwards worked with Piero della Francesca and Luca Signorelli at Arezzo. But, like both those Umbrian masters, Perugino went to Florence to complete his training. According to Vasari, he worked with Leonardo da Vinci in Andrea Verrocchio's shop, and Giovanni Santi, in his rhyming chronicle, thus alludes to the friendship that existed between the two young painters.

"Due giovin par d'étate, e par d'amore,
Leonardo da Vinci e'l Perusino
Pier della Pieve ch'é un divin pittore."

Soon after 1470, Pietro, who was already known as "il Perugino," returned to Perugia, where, in 1475, he painted one series of frescoes in the Palazzo pubblico, and another in the neighbouring town of Cerqueto three years later. Both of these have perished, and the only examples left of his early style are a few small tempera paintings, the best of which is the round Madonna of the Louvre. Here we already see this master's peculiar types, the broad brow, dove-like eyes, fluttering locks and drooping forms, together with that air of purity and candour, touched with sadness, which is the characteristic feature of his heads. The popularity which he enjoyed at this early period of his career is shown by the vast number of commissions which he received. In 1482, he was given an order by the Signoria of Florence for the decoration of the Palazzo pubblico, but never executed the work, and was summoned to Rome before the end of the year, to help in the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. Several of the works which he painted here were afterwards destroyed to

make room for Michelangelo's "Last Judgment," and the only one now remaining is the fresco of "Christ Delivering the Kéys to S. Peter." Perugino here reveals himself in the fulness of his powers. The composition is adapted from the best Florentine models, the Bramantesque temple and triumphal arches in the background are in excellent perspective, while the devotional expression of the heads and flowing lines of the landscape are in Perugino's most characteristic manner.

In 1486, Perugino left Rome, and the next twenty years of his life were spent in continual wanderings. The practical business qualities of the man, his energy and industry were as remarkable as his artistic genius. He had workshops both in Perugia and Florence, where he employed a number of scholars and assistants to execute the orders which reached him from all parts of Italy, while he himself travelled backwards and forwards between the two cities, and found time to visit many other places and undertake many other commissions. In 1489, he went to Orvieto, where he agreed to finish the work that Fra Angelico had left undone. In 1491, he was back in Rome decorating the palace of Cardinal della Rovere, who at that time held Perugino in great esteem, and imperiously desired the citizens of Orvieto to send back his favourite artist. In 1494, he visited Venice and entered into an agreement, which he never fulfilled, to paint the Council hall of the Ducal Palace. On his return journey he stopped at Cremona to paint the fine altar-piece still in the church of S. Agostino, after which he hastened back to Florence to sign new contracts and undertake fresh works. In March, 1496, he was at Perugia; later in the summer he paid a second visit to Venice, and spent several months in the following year, at the little town of Fano, painting a large and important altar-piece.

The immense demand which had arisen for his pictures is proved by the long delays to which his clients submitted, and the high prices which they paid. The Signoria of Perugia waited twelve years before they could obtain an altar-piece for their chapel, and the Board of Works of the Duomo of Orvieto negotiated with the painter during nine years, after which, in despair, they sent for Signorelli. Yet the sum of 1500 ducats, which they agreed to give Perugino, was largely in excess of that which they ultimately paid Luca, and the work which he promised to undertake for 800 florins, in the Ducal Palace at Venice, was executed by Titian for exactly half the price.

All Perugino's early works, the *tondo* of the Louvre, the "Nativity" at Villa Albani, which he painted during his visit to Rome in 1491, and many others in different collections, are in *tempera;* but in the Madonna and Saints, which he executed in 1493 for S. Domenico, of Fiesole, and which now adorns the Tribune of the Uffizi, and in the scarcely less beautiful "Madonna" of the same year at Vienna, the painter first tried a mixture of oils, and the success that attended his experiment led him to adopt oil-painting in all his subsequent work. Both the Cremona altar-piece and the fine bust portrait of a man wearing a black cap and holding a scroll with the words *Timete Deum*, are painted entirely in oils. This last work, which has been for many years in the Uffizi, was long supposed to be Perugino's own portrait, but of late years an inscription has been discovered on the back of the panel, which proves the person represented to be the Florentine, Francesco dell' Opere, brother of the *piagnone* engraver, Corniole, who died in

Venice in 1496. The portrait bears the date of July, 1494, and was probably executed during the painter's first visit to Venice. Perugino never attempted the marvellous chiaroscuro effects in which Leonardo excelled, or rivalled the Florentines of his day in their feats of drawing and modelling, but in the harmonious distribution of tints, in pure and brilliant colour he has seldom been surpassed. It is this exquisite sense of colour, combined as it is with the most poetic feeling for landscape, that lends so rare a charm to the great series of altar-pieces which he painted in Florence during the last years of the fifteenth century. Chief among these are the Pietà of S. Chiara, in Florence, the Virgin appearing to S. Bernard, originally in S. Spirito, and now in the Munich Pinacothek, the Madonna and Saints that belonged to the Certosa of Pavia, and is now in the National Gallery, and the Assumption in the Academy of Florence, which was ordered by the monks of Vallombrosa. To these we may add the Fano altar-piece, which he painted in 1497, and the beautiful fresco which he finished in 1496, for the chapter-house of the Cistercian monks of Cestello. In all of these, the great Umbrian rises to the height of his art. There is no attempt at dramatic rendering, no violent gestures or passionate wails are allowed to break the peace of the scene; but the intensity of grief and the deepest yearnings of the soul are revealed in the clasped hands and silent anguish of the Maries who watch by the dead Christ, or the beloved disciple who gazes with upturned face at his dying Lord. And these bright Archangels, with their curling locks and dreamy faces, these mild Virgins and radiant Saints, set in wide and beautiful landscapes under clear sunset skies, may well have appealed in a peculiar manner to the men and women of that troubled age. For these celestial visions spoke to that tired generation of a serener day and a more perfect bliss than any that men could find on earth, and lifted them as it were into a region of deep and endless peace. As Mr. Ruskin writes: "In Perugino's distinctive works there is simply no darkness, no wrong. Every colour is lovely, every space is light. The world, the universe is divine. All sadness is a part of harmony, and all gloom a part of peace."

In 1498, the great master returned to Perugia, where honourable tasks had long been awaiting him. He was employed by the Guild of Merchants, to decorate the hall of the Exchange with a series of frescoes, in which Gospel stories appear side by side with classical myths, and Cato and Leonidas are clothed with the same drooping form, and wear the same expression of mournful sweetness as Madonnas and Angels. The hand of inferior assistants is visible in many portions of the work, but the different scenes are framed in graceful arabesques, and the whole effect is highly decorative. On one of the ornamental pilasters that divide the subjects, Perugino introduced his own likeness, a vigorous and life-like head, which is especially interesting when compared with the magnificent portrait painted by his youthful scholar, Raphael, in the Villa Borghese.

Contemporary records throw a strange light on the personality of this painter of ideal Saints and heavenly-faced Madonnas, who was noted for driving hard bargains, and had a keen eye to his own interests. Vasari's ill-natured account of his violent and avaricious temper is, we must confess, partly justified by facts. He bought houses at Florence and Perugia, where he owned considerable property, and in 1493, married a young and beautiful wife, Chiara Fancelli, who brought him a dowry of 500 florins, whose fair form he loved to see adorned in rich clothes and

jewels, and whom he often attired with his own hands. But he was always in debt, and constantly mixed up in brawls and quarrels. After his return to Florence, in 1503, he quarrelled with Michelangelo, and publicly charged him with having called his work "antiquated and clumsy," "*goffo nell 'arte.*" The magistrates before whom both painters appeared dismissed the charge, but the great Florentine's remark indicated a very real change in popular feeling, and one which Perugino may well have resented. The old order was changing fast. The Umbrian master had outlived his popularity, and was no longer the favourite painter of the day. And besides this, there can be no doubt that soon after 1500, a rapid deterioration became visible in Perugino's works. The constant repetition of the same types and the ceaseless manufacture of sacred subjects to order, could not fail to produce a bad result, and even such pictures as the great "Ascension," which he painted in 1502, for S. Pietro of Perugia, and the frescoes of 1504–5 at Panicale and Città della Pieve, bear traces of this decline. The freshness of early inspiration we feel has passed away, the style is formal and mannered, the attitudes affected, and the faces insipid. The large share which Perugino's assistants had in the production of the pictures that issued from his workshop under his name, may partly account for this falling off, and both the "Sposalizio" at Caen, and the "Resurrection" in the Vatican, are now ascribed by the best authorities to Lo Spagna. He was still less successful in the Allegory of the "Triumph of Chastity," which he painted for Isabella d'Este's *camerino*, and the Marchioness, who had waited eight years for her picture, and had written no less than fifty-three letters on the subject, was bitterly disappointed with the result. "If your picture," she wrote to Perugino, "had been painted with greater diligence, it would have been more to your credit and to my satisfaction." But the theme which Isabella had chosen was not to the painter's taste, and he was further hampered by the number of figures and variety of motives which he was required to introduce. The little picture of "Apollo and Marsyas" in the Louvre is a far better specimen of his work in this direction, and if it lacks true classical feeling, is at least a graceful and charming idyll, conceived and executed in Perugino's most delicate style.

Towards the end of 1505, the Umbrian master finally left Florence, and early in 1507, was invited to Rome by his old patron, Pope Julius II., who employed him to paint the ceiling of the Stanza dell' Incendio in the Vatican. But here again the older master had to give way to the younger, and although Raphael dutifully refused to efface his teacher's work, Perugino had the mortification of seeing his scholar preferred to himself. Like Signorelli, he returned to his native Umbria, and spent the remainder of his life working in the neighbourhood of Perugia. He painted pictures at Spello, at Trevi and Assisi, and in 1521, was employed to finish the fresco at S. Severo which Raphael had begun sixteen years before. In 1522, he painted the Transfiguration in the gallery at Perugia, and in February, 1523, was employed upon a fresco at Fontignano, which has lately been removed to the National Gallery, when he died of the plague. He had reached the age of seventy-seven, and had outlived his great scholar three years.

Perugino is one of those prolific artists whose vast quantity of bad work obscures their really great achievements, and on this account we are sometimes inclined to judge him unfairly. We see him so often at his worst that we forget how good he can be at his best.

FRANCESCO FRANCIA

1450–1517

FRANCESCO RAIBOLINI, commonly called *il Francia* to distinguish him from his father, who bore the same name, was born at Bologna, in 1450, and soon became a distinguished goldsmith. His handsome face, pleasant manners, and high character made him a general favourite with all classes of his fellow citizens, and his finely wrought chains and girdles were in great request among the noble ladies and princesses of North Italy. In 1483, and again in 1489, he was elected steward of the Goldsmiths' Guild, and Giovanni Bentivoglio appointed him Master of the Mint, an office which he retained to the end of his life, in spite of political changes. Besides coining money and designing medals, Francia displayed his fine taste in enamels and niello-work, "often," says Vasari, "introducing as many as twenty figures of excellent proportions and graceful design into a space scarcely two fingers wide." The famous silver *pax*, which he executed in honour of Giovanni Sforza and Lucrezia Borgia's wedding, has vanished, but a smaller one adorned with a representation of the Crucifixion, which belonged to Giovanni Bentivoglio, is still preserved in the gallery of Bologna.

He first acquired a knowledge of painting from Lorenzo Costa, the Ferrarese master, who settled at Bologna in 1483, and for many years shared the same workshop. Francia and his apprentice carried on their trade on the ground floor, while Costa had his studio on the upper storey. In the register kept by Francia we find an entry, under the date of July, 1490, recording that Timoteo Viti, of Urbino, was taken into the goldsmith's shop, and at the end of a year he is mentioned as having passed into the upper shop, since he was desirous to study painting. Four years later, Timoteo returned to his native city to become Raphael's master; and his departure is recorded in the following entry: "On the 4th day of April, 1495, my beloved Timoteo left us. God grant that all blessings may go with him."

The first paintings that we have from Francia's hand were probably executed about 1490. Chief among them are the little "Crucifixion" in the Archiginnasio at Bologna, a "Madonna" which he painted for his friend, Bartolommeo Bianchini, now at Berlin, a "S. George killing the

Dragon" in the Corsini gallery, which served as a model for Raphael's picture at S. Petersburg, and the S. Stephen of the Borghese collection. This last picture is an excellent specimen of Francia's early work. The goldsmith's hand is plainly seen in the sharp outlines and metallic smoothness of surface, in the cold, hard brightness of S. Stephen's red dalmatic, and its elaborate embroideries. The painter has made no attempt to render the sufferings of the dying martyr, but the devout spirit which marks all Francia's work is already seen in the kneeling figure with the parted lips and clasped hands, breathing a silent prayer while the stones are falling about him. Closely related to this picture is the "Crucifixion" in the Louvre, with the patriarch Job lying at the feet of the Cross, pointing to a scroll bearing the words, "*Maiora sustinuit ipse*," and signed in the goldsmith-painter's usual manner, "F. Francia, *Aurifaber*."

A great advance in technique and composition is evident in the large altar-piece of the Madonna and Saints, which Francia painted in 1494 by order of Bartolommeo Felicini, for the church of Misericordia. Here the architectural background, as well as the grouping and colouring, are distinctly Ferrarese in style, and closely resemble many of Costa's works; but Francia's deeper feeling is revealed in the vigorously modelled head of the kneeling donor in the fine S. Sebastian lifting his eyes to heaven. He never equalled Costa's imaginative and dramatic powers, and always remained inferior to him in pictorial qualities, but in elevation of thought and nobleness of type he was a far greater artist.

The reputation which Francia had already acquired as a painter in 1494 is proved by a contemporary notice in a work written by Niccolo Burzio, who speaks of him as foremost among the painters and sculptors of his day, and compares him to Zeuxis and Apelles, as well as to Phidias and Praxiteles. Orders now reached him from all quarters, and Vasari tells us that soon there was hardly a church in Bologna that could not boast a picture from his hand. To this day most of Francia's finest works are still to be seen in his native city. The numerous paintings which formerly adorned the churches of the Annunziata and the Misericordia, have now been removed to the gallery, but the great altar-piece which he painted in 1499, for the Bentivoglio chapel in S. Giacomo Maggiore, still retains its original position. The rich and harmonious colouring shows how completely the artist had mastered the technique of painting, while in beauty of feature and expression he has never excelled the lovely child-angels crowned with roses, who stand on the steps of the Virgin's throne, or stretch out their arms to the Child on her knee. Here S. Sebastian is once more a prominent figure, and was often used as a model by the Caracci, who pronounced this figure of Francia's to be one of the finest studies of human form in all Renaissance art. The beautiful painting of the Madonna, with an angel offering a casket to the Child, in the Mond collection, and the interesting "Annunciation" at Bologna, belong to the same period. In this last-named picture, the angelic salutation is treated as a mystic event, and all the persons of the Trinity are introduced, together with a group of Saints who meditate devoutly on this great mystery. The birds sing in the branches of the trees, and a green lizard creeps along in the grass of the foreground bearing a scroll with the date MCCCCC. and the words "*Francia Aurifex pinxit.*" Among the best works which Francia painted early in the sixteenth century we must also mention the "Adoration of the Magi," with its crowd of figures and horses and fine

lake and mountain background, in the Dresden gallery, and the lovely "Madonna of the Rose-garden" at Munich.

Several excellent pictures were also executed by him about this time for churches and convents of neighbouring cities. The "Deposition," which he painted for the Benedictines of Parma, is remarkable for the beauty of the hilly landscape and rich sunset sky, as well as for the dramatic action of the figures. The deepest emotion is visible on the faces of the women who support the dead Christ, while Salome, standing on the other side, flings back both her arms with a gesture of despair that is unlike anything else in Francia's works. Closely connected with this "Deposition" is the famous "Pietà" of the National Gallery, which was originally attached to the fine picture of the enthroned Madonna and S. Anne in the same collection. This altar-piece was for many years in the church of S. Frediano of Lucca, which still contains one of Francia's largest compositions, a "Coronation of the Virgin," who, robed in purple and gold, is seen kneeling at the Father's feet in the presence of all the kings and patriarchs of old. Another Coronation, in which the same goodly company is introduced, and which is popularly known as the picture of "All the Saints," may be seen in the Duomo of Ferrara.

Besides these pictures, Francia also painted several series of frescoes in the early years of the century. Unfortunately the scenes from the history of Judith, and the Dispute of Philosophers, which he painted for the Bentivoglio princes, were destroyed by the mob who sacked the palace in 1507; and the frescoes of S. Cecilia's Chapel have been sadly mutilated by the French soldiery, who stabled their horses within its walls in the last century. This little church, close to S. Giacomo Maggiore, was re-built by the Bentivogli in the days of their supremacy, and decorated by Costa and Francia and their scholars between 1504 and 1506, with a series of frescoes on the legend of S. Cecilia. The two subjects painted by Francia are the "Marriage" and "Burial of the Virgin Martyr." Of these, the first is both the finest and the best preserved. The wedding takes place under a Corinthian portico opening on a mountain landscape, where tall pines rise against the evening sky. The bridegroom is in the act of placing the ring on the finger of the bride, who shrinks timidly back and turns her face away with the same look of tender melancholy that we see in all Francia's Madonnas. On either side are a group of youths and maidens, who look on with deep interest and sympathy in their faces. The heads are noble, and the flowing lines of the drapery lend a touch of classic grace to the figures. The whole composition bears a curious likeness to that famous Sposalizio which the young Raphael was painting in the self-same year up at Città di Castello. Francia's heads with their peculiar type and expression are altogether his own, but the shape of the picture and the position and grouping of the figures are very similar, and remind us that both masters derive their art from the same source.

These frescoes were the last works which Francia executed for his generous patrons, the Bentivogli. Their expulsion in November, 1506, was a severe blow to him, and he had the further grief of seeing his finest paintings destroyed by the infuriated populace. But he did not want for patrons. Julian II. retained him in his service, and as Master of the Mint he was required to coin money inscribed with the words, *Bononia per Julium a tyrannis liberata*, to be thrown to the people when the Pope entered Bologna in triumph. To the end of his life he retained the love and

respect of his fellow countrymen. In 1512, he was elected one of the sixteen Gonfalonieri of the city, and two years later Master of the Four Arts. "He was reverenced as a god in Bologna," writes Vasari, "and not even his friendship for Raphael and his desire to see the works of that great master could induce him to leave his native city." The two masters, Vasari tells us, exchanged letters and portraits, but the genuineness of the correspondence between Raphael and Francia which Malvasia published, has been questioned with good reason, while the story of Francia's death having been caused by grief and envy at the sight of Raphael's "S. Cecilia" is a pure fabrication. As a matter of fact, the picture was sent to Bologna early in 1516, two years before the death of Francia.

As a portrait-painter Francia enjoyed great reputation, and when Federigo Gonzaga was at Bologna on his journey to Rome in 1510, his mother, Isabella d'Este, who never lost a chance that came in her way, wrote to beg Francia to paint the boy's portrait. The artist gratified her wish, and the portrait which he sent to Mantua ten days later, met with the highest approval from the Marchioness, who wrote back that she marvelled how any painter could have produced so admirable a work in so short a time. Six months after this she asked Francia to paint a *fantasia* for her *camerino*, but the work seems ultimately to have been assigned to Costa, who had lately been appointed Court-painter at Mantua, and whom Isabella feared to offend. In the following autumn, however, Francia had the honour of painting the great lady's own portrait, and Isabella sent him a grateful letter, saying that the only fault she could find with him was that he had made her appear more beautiful than she really was. Unfortunately both Isabella's portrait and that of her son have perished, together with most of Francia's works in this line. The fine, but much-restored portrait of Evangelista Scappi, however, may still be seen in the Uffizi, and an excellent one of his friend, Bartolommeo Bianchini, the property of Mr. Salting, was exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1894.

The works of Francia's latter years bear marked symptoms of declining powers, and are very inferior to his earlier productions. His types and attitudes are constantly repeated, and his Madonnas and children become formal and affected. Among the best are the "Baptism of Christ," at Dresden, which he painted for a Modena church in 1500, a replica of the same subject at Hampton Court, a "Presentation" at Cesena, and à "Madonna and Saints" at Parma, inscribed with the date 1515. Three years later he died, on the 5th of January, 1518.

The range of Francia's art was limited, and he stood apart from the grander and larger movement of his times. He paints a Roman Lucrezia with the ecstatic smile of a dying martyr upon her face, and designs classical subjects only to give them the yearning look of Christian devotion. But the purity of his taste and the sincerity of his feeling will always give him a high place among those painters who combined technical perfection with religious earnestness, and go far to justify the saying ascribed to Raphael, "that no Madonnas were as holy and as beautiful as those which Francia painted."

RAPHAEL

1483–1520

AS Leonardo and Michelangelo sum up the excellences of the Florentine school, as Titian marks the highest development of Venetian painting, so Raphael represents the final outcome of artistic endeavour in Central Italy. And as the different tendencies of the age, the passion for scientific research, the enthusiasm for antiquity and the worship of form found expression in the work of individual artists, such as Mantegna or Piero della Francesca, so all these separate currents of thought met in the art of the great master of Urbino, who was himself the finest flower of the Renaissance.

All good and kindly influences were present at the birth of this fortunate child of genius, and helped to foster his growth. He was born on the 6th of April, 1483, at Urbino, that brilliant little Court where art and letters flourished under the paternal rule of enlightened princes, and where Duke Guidobaldo and Duchess Elizabeth took the young painter from the first under their protection. His father, Giovanni Santi, was an artist and the friend of artists. And when he died in 1494, his son found a congenial spirit and excellent teacher in Timoteo Viti, that favourite pupil of Francia, who, in 1495, left Bologna to settle in his old home at Urbino. The same Ferrarese types that we see in Timoteo's pictures, the same gentle feeling and naïve grace, are apparent not only in Raphael's early paintings, but in the works of his riper years, and recur at intervals all through his career. In the four lovely little pictures that Raphael painted before he left Urbino, the "Vision of a Knight" in the National Gallery, the "S. Michael and S. George" in the Louvre, and the "Three Graces" at Chantilly, we see the first-fruits of that romantic imagination and instinctive love of beauty to which the world owes so much.

In 1500, Raphael, then seventeen years of age, went to Perugia as the assistant of Perugino, the great Umbrian master, whom his father had called "a divine painter," and who was then at the height of his fame. The first independent pictures which Raphael painted at Perugia, the "Crucifixion" in the Mond collection, and the "Coronation of the Virgin" in the Vatican, are so closely imitated from Perugino, that it is difficult at first sight to distinguish them from the Umbrian master's works. All through the early stages of the young painter's career we trace the

same distrust of his own powers, the same readiness to adopt the ideas and learn the methods of other masters. But together with this singular receptiveness, Raphael showed a marvellous power of selecting and combining, of altering and improving the most different motives, and of blending all together into one perfect whole. The Sposalizio of the Brera, which he painted in 1504 for the Franciscans of Città di Casbello, is a striking example of what his genius could do in this direction. The form of the picture and grouping of the figures follow the traditions of the Ferrara school, some types recall Timoteo, others are modelled on Perugino's pattern, but the whole is immeasurably superior to the work of either master, and reveals the young painter's own heaven-born genius.

Towards the close of the year 1504, Raphael came to Florence, and threw himself with all the enthusiasm of his young and ardent nature into this new world. "The city," writes Vasari, "and the things that he saw there, seemed to him divine; and, from being a master, he once more became a scholar." He studied the frescoes and the marbles of Donatello, copied Michelangelo's "David," and mastered the principles of perspective and anatomy. But the two masters who exercised the greatest influence upon his impressionable mind were Leonardo and Fra Bartolommeo. From their works he learnt new secrets of colour and modelling, of grouping and design, which soon became evident in his works. The earliest and, in some ways, the most beautiful of his Madonnas, the "Gran Duca" and the small "Virgin" at Panshanger, were painted during the first year that he spent in Florence, and the happy union of ideal beauty and human tenderness which they display, marks the new stage upon which he had entered. The Ansidei Virgin in the National Gallery, and the "Madonna di Sant' Antonio" at South Kensington Museum, were executed for churches of Perugia, during the visit which he paid there in the winter of 1505–1506; but although both altar-pieces are framed on the old Umbrian pattern, they recall the influence of his new Florentine models. A third group of Madonnas, distinguished by the pyramidal grouping, which Raphael had learnt from Fra Bartolommeo, belong to this second Florentine period, and were painted in 1506 and 1507. These are the "Madonna del Cardellino" in the Uffizi, the "Virgin of the Meadow" at Vienna, and the "Belle Jardinière" of the Louvre. All these rank among Raphael's fairest creations, and are perfectly distinct in form and colour, but alike in the loveliness of the faces and the rich beauty of the landscape. Another "Holy Family," in which the motive of the Child playing with the lamb is clearly taken from Leonardo's famous cartoon, is now at Madrid, and bears the date of 1507, while the fine "S. Katharine" of the National Gallery and several other Madonnas belong to the year 1508. But the most important work of this period is the "Entombment" of the Borghese Gallery, which Raphael painted for the chapel endowed by Atalanta Baglioni, in the Duomo of Perugia, in memory of her murdered son. A whole series of drawings, now dispersed in different public and private galleries, bear witness to the immense amount of time and thought which the young master devoted to the preparation of this altar-piece. His natural diffidence prompted him to alter his design repeatedly, and to borrow motives by turn from Perugino, Mantegna, and Michelangelo. The result proved disappointing, and in spite of the acclamation with which his contemporaries hailed the picture, and of the undoubted skill with which all these separate elements are blended together, Raphael's

"Entombment" leaves us cold and unmoved. There is far more spontaneous charm in the chiaroscuro paintings of the predella—three roundels of Faith, Hope, and Charity, each of them attended with lovely children—which are now preserved in the Vatican.

By this time Raphael had become a mature and independent artist, and held a high place, both in Florence and Perugia, among the foremost painters of the day. All that he now wanted was a larger sphere for the exercise of his brilliant powers. This he felt himself when, in 1508, he wrote to his uncle at Urbino, begging him to ask the new Duke, Francesco della Rovere, for a recommendation to the Gonfaloniere of Florence. The opportunity soon came, but from an unexpected quarter. Before the end of the year, the young Duke's uncle, Pope Julius II., summoned the master of Urbino to help in the decoration of the Vatican, and thus, at the age of five-and-twenty, Raphael came to Rome. Here, for the first time, he was brought face to face with the great monuments of classical antiquity and, in the presence of the ancient world, his genius blossomed out in a thousand new and lovely forms. His first great works were the frescoes of the Stanza della Segnatura. On the ceiling he painted allegorical figures of Theology, Philosophy, Law, and Poetry, the four chief branches of learning which, as his father tells us in his poem, were represented in similar manner in the library of the ducal palace at Urbino. On the walls Raphael placed his great vision of the Church militant and triumphant, commonly called "The Dispute of the Blessed Sacrament," opposite the "Greek Philosophers of the School of Athens," and "Justinian and Pope Gregory XI. as Lawgivers" opposite "Apollo and the Muses on Mount Parnassus." This magnificent conception, embodying the noblest dreams of the humanist and the holy aspirations of the Catholic Church, was set forth with a unity and grandeur and, at the same time, a beauty and perfection which surpassed the highest expectations that had been formed of Raphael's genius. The Pope, delighted with the success of his experiment, lavished honours and rewards upon the fortunate painter, and bade him decorate the next Stanza with another series of frescoes, illustrating the divine intervention on behalf of the Church in past ages. Accordingly Raphael painted his great fresco of the Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple of Jerusalem, and introduced Pope Julius himself, borne on the *sedia gestatoria*, suddenly appearing in the midst of this scene of violence and confusion. Above the windows of the same hall he represented the Mass of Bolsena, with Pope and Cardinals kneeling before the altar where the miracle takes place. The grandeur of the composition is only equalled by the splendour of the colouring, which here reaches a Venetian richness and depth of tone which Raphael may partly have acquired from his friendship with Sebastiano del Piombo, who had lately arrived in Rome and was working at Agostino Chigi's villa on the Tiber. But Julius II. died before the Stanza di Eliodoro was finished; and it is the new Pope, Leo X., who appears in Raphael's fresco of Attila's Retreat. The terror and confusion of Attila and his horsemen at the apparition of S. Peter and S. Paul in the air, and the swift rush of the avenging saints, is rendered in the most dramatic manner; while the massive features of Leo X. and his cunning, oily-faced cardinals are admirably reproduced. In the last fresco of the room, the "Deliverance of S. Peter from Prison," we have another allusion to Leo X., whose escape from his French captors after the battle of Ravenna is here commemorated. The striking effect produced by the sudden flood of light,

which radiates from the angel who stands behind the dark prison bars, filled the painter's contemporaries with wonder, and made Vasari pronounce this fresco to be the finest of the whole series.

While these great works were proceeding, Raphael was constantly interrupted by other demands upon his time and thought. All the cardinals and princes of Italy were clamouring for pictures from his hand, and not even the help of a large army of assistants could enable him to execute the innumerable orders which he received. Accordingly, a considerable proportion of the pictures which issued from his atelier were either partly or entirely the work of his scholars, chief among whom he numbered such able assistants as Giulio Romano, Francesco Penni, and Perino del Vaga. Of the few in which we recognise his own hand, the "Madonna di Casa d'Alba" in S. Petersburg, the popular "Madonna della Sedia," and the great "Virgin of Foligno," belong to his early years in Rome, and were painted in the reign of Julius II., while the "S. Cecilia" at Bologna, and the "Madonna di San Sisto" at Dresden belong to a later period. The altar-piece of S. Cecilia was ordered in 1513, by Cardinal de' Pacci for a noble Bolognese lady, but not finished until 1515, and was transferred to canvas and entirely repainted after being taken to Paris in 1798, so that Raphael's design is all that remains of the original painting. The Sistine Madonna has also suffered serious injuries, but the sublime beauty of the composition still renders it unique among the Virgins of Raphael's Roman days. The same noble and impressive character marks the cartoons of the Acts of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, that were designed between June 1515, and December 1516, and sent to Flanders to be reproduced in tapestries intended to adorn the Sistine Chapel. Three of the series were lost, but the other seven were bought by Charles I. in 1630, and are now at South Kensington Museum. The chief figures were painted by Raphael's hand, and their consummate drawing and admirable symmetry is as remarkable as the simple grandeur of the composition, while the exactness with which each detail of the sacred story is followed, has contributed largely to their great and lasting popularity.

Early in his career Raphael became noted as a portrait-painter, and all the leading personages at the Papal Court were eager to be immortalised by his hand. His own graceful and attractive likeness and the fine bust of Perugino in the Borghese are the only portraits of his Urbino days now in existence, while the half-lengths of the wealthy merchant Angelo Doni and his richly clad and complacent-looking wife in the Pitti, belong to his early Florentine years. The ruined picture of Pope Julius II., and the splendid group of Leo X., with his two Cardinals, de' Rossi and Giulio de' Medici, stand out supreme among the portraits of his Roman period. No less wonderful as revelations of human character, and still more admirable in the refined beauty of their execution, are the portraits of the master and two intimate friends, Cardinal Bibbiena, that "bel Bernardo," whose niece was to have been Raphael's wife, and Baldassare Castiglione, the "perfect gentleman," who had known the painter in the old Urbino days, and lived to lament his loss with so true a sorrow. To these we must add the "Donna Velata" of the Pitti, that living portrait of the woman whom he loved to his dying day, and whose face, idealised and glorified, lives for all time in the royal Virgin of the San Sisto.

The last years of Raphael's life were crowded with a multitude of colossal enterprises. In 1514, Leo X. had appointed him chief architect of S. Peter's, and a year later inspector of antiquities in Rome. The building of S. Peter's, the "grandest church in the world," as he proudly calls it in a letter to his uncle at Urbino, naturally made large demands upon his time, and in his last days, archæological researches among the classical remains of ancient Rome became his most absorbing pursuit. And all the while he was busily engaged in carrying out his plans for the decoration of the Vatican. Besides completing the frescoes of the Stanza dell' Incendio, so-called from the famous representation of the fire in the Borgo, which Leo IV. was said to have arrested by making the sign of the Cross, he prepared cartoons for the paintings of the Hall of Constantine, and superintended the works of the Loggia. The arcades of this gallery on the upper storey of the Papal palace, were adorned with stucco ornaments in imitation of the antique arabesques lately discovered in the baths of Titus, and the vault was decorated with the exquisite little paintings popularly known as Raphael's Bible. The other great decorative work of his last days was the series of frescoes from the myth of Cupid and Psyche in the Farnese villa, where, some years before, he had painted his most beautiful composition, "Galatea Riding on the Waves." All of these works were carried out from his designs by a vast number of scholars and assistants, who built churches and decorated villas and palaces under his direction, and who adored him as a master and loved him as a father. No artist before him had ever attained so proud a position. He lived, Vasari tells us, more like a prince than a painter, courted and caressed by kings and cardinals, and honoured by the especial favour of the Pope. But through all, he kept the same modest and charming nature, and was as eager and anxious to learn from others, as he had been in the days of his youth. The old humanist, Calcagnini, who had returned to Rome in 1519, after many years of absence, wrote glowing accounts to his German friends of this wonderful youth, the first of living painters and most excellent of architects, who was looked upon by the Pope as a god sent down from heaven to restore the Eternal City to her ancient majesty, and who, far from being puffed up with pride, was on friendly terms with every one, and always grateful for advice and criticism from others. "He is never better pleased than when his opinion is doubted or disputed, and is always eager to learn, counting this to be the greatest joy in life." But this very gentleness and amiability proved fatal to Raphael in the end. He was so anxious to please every one, so eager to oblige the countless visitors who thronged his doors with entreaties for a portrait or a design, that he became overwhelmed with the multitude of his labours, and found himself pressed on all sides by impatient clients whose demands he could not satisfy. At length his health gave way under the strain. During the winter of 1519, the building of S. Peter's required constant attention, and his friends noticed the unwonted melancholy that oppressed him. Still he worked on with unceasing energy, and began the great altar-piece of the "Transfiguration," which Cardinal dei Medici was so eager to obtain. But on the 27th of March, he fell ill of malarial fever, caught, it is said, on some archæological survey in the old quarters of the city, and sank rapidly, worn out in body and mind. And at nine o'clock on Good Friday, the 6th of April, his thirty-eighth birthday, he died, to the grief and consternation of all Rome. The Pope wept bitterly,

and the crowds who came to take a last look at the great painter's face, broke into tears and sobs when they saw him lying dead, at the foot of his unfinished "Transfiguration." Even his rivals grieved for him, and Sebastiano del Piombo, who had hated and reviled him in his lifetime, muttered a prayer for the repose of his soul when he told Michelangelo that "poor Raphael of Urbino was no more." "And indeed," as a Venetian senator wrote home that sad Eastertide, "a most rare and excellent master has passed away, and every gentle soul must grieve to think that he is gone."

ANTONIO ALLEGRI DA CORREGGIO

1494–1534

ANTONIO ALLEGRI, generally known by the name of his birth-place, Correggio, was one of the most famous and distinctive artists who flourished in the noontide of the Renaissance. Gifted with an ardent and sensitive nature, which made him as keenly alive to each passing emotion of the human heart as he was to the fleeting effects of sunlight and shadow in the visible world, he stamped his works with an individuality as powerful as that of Michelangelo himself. His great aim was to paint the object before him in the most real and actual manner, and at the same time, with the highest possible degree of grace and charm. And because he realised how much natural objects are affected by the play of light and shade, he devoted especial attention to the study of chiaroscuro, and succeeded in producing those magic effects that we associate with his name. Neither a thinker, nor yet a teacher, as indifferent to intellectual as he was to spiritual truths, he looked upon the world from a purely pictorial point of view, and painted it with a technical perfection, and a mastery of resources which few have ever equalled. Whether his art attracts or repels us, whether we are fascinated by the charm of his creations or offended by his want of elevation, it is impossible not to feel interest in a painter whose artistic inspiration was so true and genuine.

Yet this master, who, in his spontaneous delight in life and unconscious paganism, was in so remarkable manner the exponent of his age, had little contact with the outer world. Unlike the other great masters of the Renaissance, he never visited Florence or Rome, but lived apart from the centres of art and learning, and had little to do with courts and princes. Cathedral chapters and religious confraternities were his chief patrons, and most of his works were painted in churches or convents. His short life was spent in comparative obscurity, and nothing could well be less eventful then the story of his career.

His father, Pellegrino Allegri, was a farmer and manufacturer in the small town of Correggio, where Antonio was born, in 1494. As a boy he probably learnt the rudiments of

painting from his uncle, Lorenzo, or some other local artist, and may afterwards have studied under the Ferrarese master, Bianchi, who died at Modena in 1510. But he certainly spent some years at Mantua before he was twenty, and worked under Lorenzo Costa, who was then painting at the court of the Gonzagas. Correggio itself was not without lovers of art, and Veronica Gambara, the wife of the reigning prince, early honoured young Allegri with tokens of her regard, and probably recommended the promising youth to her illustrious friend, Isabella d'Este.

Although Correggio plainly received his training from Ferrarese masters, the influence of Mantegna is strongly marked in the works which he painted between 1512 and 1515. Three of these charming pictures are now in England—Mr. Benson's "Christ taking leave of His Mother," a "Holy Family" at Hampton Court, and the altar-piece, which the young artist painted for the church of S. Martha, at Correggio. The same intensity of feeling and lovely effects of light, the same Ferrarese style of colour and modelling that mark these early works, are seen in Dr. Frizzoni's graceful "Marriage of S. Katharine," and several small Madonnas of the same period, in other parts of Italy.

In 1514, Correggio painted the large Madonna of S. Francis, now at Dresden, for the high altar of the Franciscan Church in his native city. Here again the sources from which his art was derived are clearly seen. The general treatment of the subject and the chiaroscuro medallions that decorate the Virgin's throne are borrowed from Costa. The "S. Sebastian" and "S. Katharine" closely resemble Francia's Saints, while the Virgin herself is taken directly from Mantegna's Madonna della Vittoria. At the same time, the strong individuality of this painter of twenty is already apparent in the smiling faces and dainty forms of the boy-angel that hover overhead, as well as in the delicate gradations of light and shade, and the passionate sentiment of the heads.

Early in 1518, Correggio was summoned to the neighbouring city of Parma to decorate a suite of rooms which Donna Giovanna di Piacenza, Abbess of S. Paolo, had built for her private use. The nuns of this convent were notorious for their lax discipline, and the secular-minded Abbess, who had chosen Diana for her patron, now desired to see her rooms adorned with mythological paintings. The task was exactly suited to Correggio's genius, and the frescoes of the Camera di S. Paolo are among the most lovely decorations of the Renaissance. The huntress-queen, wearing the silver crescent on her brow, is represented over the mantelpiece driving her chariot on the clouds, and the vaulted ceiling is transformed into a fairy bower, where a troop of joyous children are at play. Their rosy limbs and softly rounded forms gleam among the dark foliage, and their merry faces sparkle with fun and laughter. Below are sixteen lunettes of classical subjects, painted in grisaille, Minerva bearing her lighted torch, Fortune with her cornucopia, and other gods, whose statuesque forms and sober tints contrast finely with the bright hues and sportive gambols of the children at play among the trellised vines. A strange fate attended these exquisite creations of Correggio's youth. Soon after his work at S. Paolo was finished, the Pope interfered to put an end to Abbess Giovanna's proceedings. The rules of conventual discipline were rigidly enforced, and Correggio's room frescoes remained hidden from the outer world for more than a hundred years. It was only at the end of the last century that an artist, who was painting an altar-piece of the

convent, accidentally discovered their existence, and the long concealed treasures were at length revealed to the public gaze.

The frescoes of the Camera di S. Paolo established Correggio's fame in Parma. In 1520, he returned there to decorate the cupola of S. Giovanni, and was soon afterwards followed by his young wife, Girolama Merlini, the daughter of the Marquis of Mantua's armour-bearer, who had been slain at the battle of Fornovo. Many of his graceful little Madonnas, such as the *Zingarella* at Naples, and the *Riposo* in the Uffizi, were painted by Correggio in the early days of his married life, and are in reality little genre-pieces, rather than sacred subjects. After giving birth to a son at Correggio, Girolama settled with her husband at Parma, where three daughters were born to them during the next few years. Here Allegri decorated both the cupola and apse of S. Giovanni with frescoes. The apse was ruthlessly pulled down in 1587, and a group of the Madonna receiving the crown from her Son's hands is the only fragment of the frescoes remaining, while a noble lunette of S. John writing his Revelation may still be seen above the transept door. The grand composition of the Ascension, in the cupola, has fortunately survived, and retains much of its original beauty of colour under a thick coating of grease and smoke. A colossal figure of Christ, violently fore-shortened, is seen floating heavenwards in a sea of light, surrounded by Apostles and Evangelists throned on the clouds and riotous boy-angels, who gambol in space or play hide-and-seek among the fluttering draperies of the Saints. The conception was a bold one, but the life and fire of the whole scene, the masterly skill with which the figures are foreshortened, and the masses of light and shade balanced, excited general admiration among Correggio's contemporaries.

The success of this daring experiment led the Canons of the Duomo of Parma to employ Allegri to decorate the Cathedral cupola. Here he painted his famous Assumption of the Virgin, perhaps the most wonderful scene of triumphant exultation that has ever been rendered in art. All the vast multitude of beings are animated with the same spirit. The Saints gazing upwards with wonder and delight, the Angel hosts leaping and dancing in their wild transports of joy, all abandon themselves to the same tumultuous raptures and share in the blissful ecstasy of the ascending Madonna, as, with head thrown back and outstretched arms, she soars upwards into highest heaven. The amazing power of the composition may well have filled successive generations with admiration. Annibale Caracci, we are told, stood dumb with surprise at the sight, and Titian exclaimed that if the Cathedral canons had filled the cupola with gold, they would not have rewarded the painter sufficiently. In later days Parma became a place of pilgrimage for artists of all races and nations, and Correggio's cupola was regarded as the highest example of Italian art. And yet the satirical Canon, who compared Correggio's representation of the heavenly hosts to a hash of frogs, was not altogether wrong. The confusion produced by the sight of all these violently foreshortened and interlaced limbs is indescribable, and proves that the difficulties of the task which the painter had attempted were beyond the limits of his art. It is said that neither Correggio himself nor his patrons were quite satisfied with the result, and that the artist's feelings were hurt by the ill-natured comments of the citizens of Parma. The decoration of the choir which had formed part of the original contract was abandoned, and after receiving his last instalment of 350 ducats for the frescoes of the cupola, on the 17th of November, 1530, Correggio

returned to his native town. The death of his young wife helped to deepen the gloom of his nature, which Vasari describes as "very melancholy." His children were a great care to him, and "he grieved," the biographer tells us, "more than was reasonable under the burden of those troubles that are common to all." With his great reputation and many friends, he could easily have sought a wider sphere, but he preferred the tranquillity of his native town, where he spent the last four years of his life, secure in the honourable independence which he had attained.

During the intervals of work upon his great frescoes at Parma he had painted many well-known pictures, among others the "Ecce Homo" of the National Gallery, and the "Christ in Gethsemane" at Apsley House, which was found in Joseph Bonaparte's coach after the battle of Vittoria, and presented by the restored King of Spain, Ferdinand VII., to the Duke of Wellington. Both the "Descent from the Cross" and the "Martyrdom of SS. Placidus and Flavia," in the Parma Gallery, were originally painted for a chapel in S. Giovanni. But these subjects were little suited to Correggio's essentially lyrical genius, and neither the beauty of the fainting Virgin nor the lovely sunlight on the distant landscape can atone for the exaggerated gestures of the mourners and the want of dramatic power. The famous "Notte," at Dresden, was ordered, in 1522, for a church in Reggio, but not completed until 1530. So enthusiastic was the admiration with which this work was regarded in the following century, that the reigning Duke of Modena, desiring to secure possession of the picture, caused it to be secretly abstracted from the church by night, from fear of exciting a popular tumult. The companion picture of "Il Giorno," or, the Madonna of S. Jerome, a less famous but still finer work, was painted in 1528 for a church in Parma. The beauty of the golden-haired Magdalen, resting her head against the Child, attracted much attention at the time, and probably led Allegri to paint that picture of the Magdalen which Veronica Gambara described in terms of lively admiration in a letter to Isabella d'Este: "I should fail in my duty to your Highness," she writes, in September 1528, "if I did not tell you of the masterpiece of painting which our Antonio Allegri has just completed, knowing as I do how much joy it would give your Highness, who has so excellent a knowledge of these things. The picture represents the Magdalen, in a dark cave in the desert, kneeling, with clasped hands, imploring pardon for her sins. Her beautiful attitude and the expression of deep sorrow on her most lovely face are so marvellous that all who see the picture are filled with wonder. In this work he has expressed all that is sublime in the art of which he is so great a master." Unfortunately the picture has vanished, and the "Reading Magdalen" in the Dresden Gallery which long bore Correggio's name, is now justly recognised as an inferior work by some Flemish artist of the Bolognese School.

After Allegri's return to Correggio, in 1530, he only painted one altar-piece, the "Madonna of S. George," which hangs with the "Virgin of S. Francis," the "Notte," and the "Madonna of S. Sebastian," in the Dresden Gallery, and devoted himself to more congenial subjects. Two mythological pictures, the "Education of Cupid" in the National Gallery, and the "Sleeping Antiope" in the Louvre, had been already painted during his residence at Parma, for Federigo Gonzaga, and passed with the best of the Mantua collection into the hands of Charles I. Three others, the "Io" at Vienna, the ruined "Leda" at Berlin, and the Borghese "Danaë," were painted

after Allegri's return to his native town, and presented by Federigo Gonzaga to Charles V., when he visited Correggio in 1532. All of these pictures have changed hands repeatedly, and undergone the strangest vicissitudes. Two of them, the "Leda" and "Danaë," narrowly escaped destruction. They were carried off from Prague to Stockholm by the Swedish invaders, and placed in a stable where they were used as shutters to keep out wind and rain, until Queen Christina discovered their value and brought them to Paris. But here Louis, Duke of Orleans, the son of the Regent, to whose collection they belonged, took objection to the "Leda" on moral grounds, and caused the head of the nymph to be cut out, while by some miracle the "Danaë" was spared, and ultimately passed into the Borghese Gallery. The injuries which these paintings have suffered is the more to be regretted since in them Correggio's genius attains its highest and most complete expression. Both the "Io" and "Leda," irreparably damaged as they are, contain passages of rare loveliness, while the form of Danaë lying on her couch, veiled in transparent shadows, and that of Antiope, sleeping in the forest shades, are marvels of flesh-painting which no painter has excelled.

Besides these great pictures, Correggio painted two allegories of the Vices and Virtues in tempera for Isabella d'Este, and was engaged on a fresh series for her son, when a short and sudden illness brought his life to a premature close. He died on the 5th of March, 1534, in his father's house, where he had been born forty years before, and was buried the next day in the church of S. Francis, under the great altar-piece of his youth. The enthusiasm with which Correggio's works were regarded during the next two hundred years, and the widespread influence which they exerted on future generations, proved even more baneful than that of Raphael or Michelangelo. Allegri himself, with his ideal nature and splendid genius, had gone perilously near the verge, and had narrowly escaped falling into mannerism and exaggeration. The artists of the next generation strove to imitate his style, and only succeeded in copying his defects. They repeated his conceptions and adopted his strained attitudes and violent foreshortenings, without a spark of the poetic grace and joyousness that made him so true a child of the Renaissance. But the great age was slowly drawing to its end. The fire was spent, and the divine flame which had shone with so clear a lustre through the last two centuries was slowly dying down into dust and ashes.

BERNARDINO LUINI

1480–1533

THE history of the Lombard school of painting is still wrapped in obscurity, and there are probably few subjects that would better repay careful investigation. We know little, for instance, of Bernardino Luini, that charming artist who has been called the Raphael of the Lombard school, and whose frescoes and pictures abound in Milan and the surrounding country. The exact date of his birth and death are alike unknown, and only four of his works, all of them executed during the latter part of his career, are inscribed with the year in which they were painted. All we know is that his father's name was Giovanni Lutero, and that he lived at the little town of Luino, on the banks of the Lago Maggiore, where Bernardino was probably born, between 1475 and 1480. "This only is certain," writes Mr. Ruskin, who was one of the first to discover Luini's rare merit, "that he was born in the loveliest district of North Italy, where hills and streams and air meet in softest harmonies. Child of the Alps and of their divinest lake, he is taught without doubt or dismay a lofty religious creed and a sufficient law of life and of its mechanical arts."

The pictures of Luini, as Vasari tells us, were early confused with those of Leonardo, and on this account the Lombard painter was generally supposed to be the pupil of the great Florentine master. But the works which he executed early in the sixteenth century tell another story, and Morelli is probably right in saying that Ambrogio Borgognone was his first teacher. Certainly the "Pietà" in the church of S. Maria della Passione, at Milan, and the frescoes which he executed for the Villa Pelucca, and the convent Della Vetere, in the neighbourhood, are distinctly Lombard in character, and closely resemble the style of Borgognone and Bramantino, both of whom were frequently employed to decorate the same buildings as Luini. Nowhere is this Lombard character more evident than in the fresco which originally adorned the chapel of Villa Pelucca, that lovely vision of S. Katharine, borne to her tomb by flying angels, in which the young painter already reveals the tender poetry of his soul.

After 1510, we find a marked change in Luini's art. It is unlikely that he ever came into personal contact with Leonardo, who left Milan in 1499, but the mighty creations of the great master

made a deep impression on the young Lombard's gentle and receptive nature. In common with his other fellow-artists in Milan, he strove to adopt Leonardo's technique, borrowed motives from Leonardo's pictures and drawings, and introduced the rocky landscapes which that master loved in the background of his own Madonnas. Above all, Luini, more than any of his comrades, succeeded in catching the exquisite grace and charm of expression that belongs to Leonardo's heads, and which touched a kindred chord in his own soul. Among the works in which this influence is most strongly felt, are the famous "Modesty and Vanity" of the Sciarra Colonna Gallery, which has lately left Rome; the "Christ among the Pharisees" in our own National Gallery; and the different versions of the "Daughter of Herodias" in the Uffizi and the Louvre; all of which were formerly supposed to be genuine works of Leonardo.

But, about the year 1520, Luini seems to have emerged from this Leonardesque phase, and in the works of this third period, he reveals himself as an independent master of considerable powers. In 1521, he painted the Madonna and Child with S. Barbara and S. Anthony, and a boy-angel playing the guitar on the steps of the throne, now in the Brera, one of his most refined and graceful works. Immediately afterwards he set to work on the fresco of the "Crowning with Thorns," which he executed by order of Bernardino Giglio, in the chapter-house of the Confraternity of the Holy Thorn, now part of the Ambrosian Library. The scene is laid in a vaulted and arcaded hall, and rows of pillars divide the subject into three compartments. In the centre the suffering Christ, a noble and pathetic figure, is seated on a throne between two soldiers; on either side six members of the confraternity kneel, robed in black; and in the background the Virgin and S. John, Joseph, and the Magdalen contemplate the scene with sorrowful gestures, while above two cherubs bear a tablet inscribed with the words, *Caput regis gloriæ spinis coronati.* According to a document still in existence, this large and important work was begun on the 12th of October, 1521, and finished on the 22nd of March, 1522, Luini himself painting the whole picture with the help of a single assistant. Closely connected with this fresco of the Ambrosiana, and probably executed about the same time, is the series of subjects from the Passion, in a dark chapel of S. Giorgio al Palazzo, and the fine oil-painting of the "Pietà" above the altar. Here again, in the calm and refined features of the dead Christ, and in the deep grief of His mother, we see the devotional feeling and reverent tenderness which fitted the Lombard master in so especial a manner to be the painter of the Passion.

In 1523, Luini left Milan for Legnano, where he painted the large altar-piece of the "Madonna and Saints," which still adorns the parish church, and soon afterwards must have commenced the series of frescoes and Saronno, which he completed by the end of 1525. Here, in the pilgrimage church, built in Bramantesque style, with a dome adorned ten years later by Gaudenzio Ferrari, Luini painted four frescoes which rank among his finest works. In the churches and convents of Milan and Lugano we see the master almost exclusively in the solemn scenes of the Passion; here we find him in a brighter and more joyous mood. The graceful Sposalizio with the youthful Virgin standing robed in white and crowned with an olive wreath, in the midst of her fair companions; the lovely group of the Mother and Child turning with infant delight to the grey-headed king from the far East, who kneels at His feet; the Presentation taking place

under the stately portico of the temple, and the animated scene of Christ among the doctors, are brilliant and original compositions in which Luini rises to a height which he had never before attained. The Adoration of the Magi, together with the Nativity, were also painted in tempera by Luini about this time, on the organ-case of Como Cathedral. And we find these favourite subjects once more repeated in the frescoes of Casa Litta, now removed to the Louvre, only that in them the painter was evidently assisted by his scholars, and we notice a decided falling off in the execution. It was inevitable that so popular and prolific an artist should have to depend in a great measure on the help of his assistants, among whom he numbered three of his own sons, one of whom, Aurelio, became an artist of some repute, and was still living in 1584.

One of the principal works upon which the painter was engaged between 1526 and 1529, was the decoration of the newly erected church of S. Maurizio, belonging to the ancient foundation known as the Monastero Maggiore. This sanctuary, which eventually became a complete gallery of Lombard art, was under the patronage of the Bentivoglio family, who had settled in Milan after their expulsion from Bologna. Giovanni Bentivoglio had been buried within its walls, and his granddaughter had taken the veil in the adjoining convent. His son, Alessandro Bentivoglio, whose wife, Ippolita, belonged to the Sforza family, now employed Luini to decorate the screen dividing the outer from the inner or monastic church. Here the master himself painted four beautiful figures of the virgin martyrs, Cecilia, Ursula, Apollonia, and Lucy, and two groups containing portraits of the donors, Alessandro Bentivoglio conducted by S. John the Baptist, and Ippolita his wife led by S. Agnes, to worship the Lamb of God. But early in 1529, if not before, the painter was called away to another sphere of labour, and the grand fresco of the Crucifixion, which covers the whole western wall of the Franciscan church of Santa Maria degli Angeli at Lugano, was finished by the close of that year.

This impressive fresco has suffered sadly from time and neglect; the colours have been blackened by smoke and incense and, in more than one place, altogether effaced. The three crosses set up on the hill of Calvary, and a crowd of spectators around them, occupy the foreground. Above, the air is filled with angels who hover round the dying Christ, wringing their hands in agony, or clasping them together in reverent adoration of the Godhead on the Cross. Both the thieves are already dead, and while one seraph bears the little white soul of the penitent heavenwards, a grotesque-looking devil, with long tail and cloven hoofs, snatches greedily at the lost soul of the other. In the background, between the pillared arcades of the temple, we look out on a wide landscape where the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension are all represented. The introduction of these separate episodes, it must be confessed, detracts considerably from the unity of the composition and mars the general effect. But the figure of Christ on the Cross is represented with all the painter's wonted dignity, and many of the separate groups are singularly beautiful. In point of lovely tenderness, Luini himself has never surpassed the S. John who stands at the foot of the Cross, and the Magdalen on the other side, kneeling with both arms passionately outstretched in the agony of her love and sorrow. Very graceful too is the boy sitting at the foot of the Cross, and the young mother with her children in the left-hand corner, wholly absorbed in

thought of her little ones, and apparently unconscious of the great drama passing before her eyes. An old tradition points to the good centurion on the right, a prominent figure on his white horse, as the painter's own portrait. The same personage is introduced among the followers of the three Kings in the fresco of the Adoration at Saronno, and his features are repeated in the S. Roch on the spandrels of the arches below, so that we may safely conclude this manly and thoughtful face to be that of Bernardino Luini, as he looked in the prime of life, when he painted his great fresco at Lugano.

Immediately after the "Crucifixion" was finished, he seems to have painted the "Last Supper" and the charming lunette of the Madonna, S. John, and the Child with the Lamb, in the convent refectory. Both are distinctly Leonardesque in motive and style, and show that the old spell had not yet lost its power on the artist's mind. In the convent archives we find a record of payments made both in July and December, 1529, to "*M. Bernardino de Luyno, pictori, pro mercede sua passionis dipictæ in præfata ecclesia.*" And in June, 1530, he received two further instalments of payments due to him for works executed in the refectory. But in the same year we find him again at Milan engaged in painting a devotional picture, in a chapel of S. Maurizio, for Francesco Besozzi. Here a scene from the Passion was again his theme, and the donor is represented devoutly kneeling before a pathetic representation of Christ unloosed from the column by Roman soldiers, while S. Katharine stands at his side with the palm and wheel of martyrdom. The Martyrdom and Burial of S. Katharine are painted in fresco on the side-walls, and figures of angels and sibyls on the ceiling, complete the decoration of the chapel, which was finished on the 15th of August, 1530. But long before that date, perhaps even before Luini began the work, the donor who commissioned the frescoes was dead, and the painter himself had not long to live. The last record we have of him is in 1533, when he was again at Lugano, and this time received from the treasurer of the convent a final payment of 50 lire, making up a total of 244 lire for his fresco of the Crucifixion, "*pro completa solutione operis Passionis.*" After that we hear no more of him. But at least no trace of decay or failure appears in his last works, and we may conclude that he died in the prime of life and the fulness of his powers. Luini was not a painter of great vigour or striking originality, and he worked within comparatively narrow limits, but the union of tender feeling with exquisite grace and purity of line gives his creations a peculiar charm. His perfect taste lends distinction to his work, and Mr. Ruskin has truly said, that he left nothing behind him that was not lovely.

"Every touch he lays is eternal, every thought he conceives is beautiful and pure. His hand moves always in radiance of blessing; from day to day his life enlarges in power and peace; it passes away cloudlessly, the starry twilight remaining arched far against the night."

ANDREA MANTEGNA

1431–1506

THE school of Padua was distinguished among the other local schools of North Italy, in the fifteenth century, by the possession of one supreme master, Andrea Mantegna. This great painter, whose influence gave a new impulse to contemporary art, and who more than any other represents that revived enthusiasm for classical antiquity which was the ruling passion of the age, was born at Vicenza in 1431. Ten years later his name appears in Paduan records as the adopted son and pupil of Squarcione, a tailor and embroiderer by trade, who had collected a number of ancient marbles and casts, and established a school where he trained students to work from the antique. Squarcione himself was an indifferent artist, but he at once recognised the genius of the young Andrea, who quickly outstripped his fellow-students. At the age of seventeen he painted an altar-piece in the church of S. Sophia, and a damaged fresco of S. Antony and S. Bernardino by his hand, bearing the date of 1452, may still be seen over the portal of the Santo of Padua. Two years afterwards he executed the fine altar-piece of S. Luke in the church of Santa Giustina. There the sculptural qualities of Mantegna's art are already manifest. Each admirably drawn form resembles an antique statue, and every detail is rendered with the most scrupulous care and finish.

The same classical treatment, side by side with a curiously realistic tendency, is more fully developed in the wall-paintings of the history of S. James and S. Christopher, in the church of the Eremitani. The influence of Donatello is strongly marked in these works, and the skilful foreshortening of the figures and correct perspective of the buildings are as remarkable as the accurate rendering of Roman costumes and classical architecture. The children who look out of the windows with wondering eyes, or the convert kneeling before S. James in his ragged coat and worn-out shoes, are as faithfully reproduced as the *pergola* of vines and the arched *loggie* of the Paduan streets, while in the action of the men who are dragging away the dead body of the giant Christopher, we have one of those feats of perspective which served as a model for successive generations of artists. About 1455, while Mantegna was still at work on these frescoes, he married Niccolosia, a daughter of the Venetian painter Jacopo Bellini, who had lately opened a rival workshop in Padua. This led to a

breach with his old teacher Squarcione, who pursued him with jealous reproaches, and declared his figures to be lifeless copies of old statues. But Mantegna's reputation was already made, and Lodovico Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, now sent him pressing invitations to enter his service, offering him 15 ducats a month, together with lodgings, firewood, and corn for his family. Andrea lent a willing ear to these flattering proposals, but his hands were full and several years elapsed before he was able to accept Lodovico's offer. At length, towards the end of 1559, after finishing the grand altar-piece of S. Zeno at Verona and the "Agony in the Garden," now in the National Gallery, for Giacomo Marcello, the Podestà of Padua, he moved to Mantua with his family.

Here the great master spent the next forty-six years of his life, in the service of three successive generations of the Gonzaga princes. Unfortunately the paintings with which he decorated their summer villas in the neighbourhood of Mantua have perished, and a few panel pictures are all that remain of the works which he executed during the first ten years of his residence at Lodovico's court. Chief among these are the "Madonna and Saints" of the National Gallery, the classical figure of S. George at Venice, and the beautiful triptych of the Uffizi, which the artist mentions in a letter of 1464, as destined for the chapel of the Castello of Mantua. Of the three subjects here represented, the Presentation in the Temple is especially remarkable for the dignified grace of the figures and expressive character of the heads, as well as the beauty of the draperies, which cling to the forms in the same minute folds that we see in Greek sculpture. But if on the one hand he was convinced that the most perfect models of beauty are to be found in antique art, he saw just as clearly that this perfection is only to be attained by a close study of nature. Every variety of emotion is rendered by him with the same truth and power, from the terror of the child who clings to his mother's breast, to the passionate grief of the wailing S. John in his great Entombment.

Between 1470 and 1474, Mantegna decorated the walls of the Camera dei Sposi in the old Castello of Mantua with family groups of the Gonzaga family. Many of his frescoes have been destroyed, but there we may still see the Marquis Lodovico and his German wife in her quaint horn-shaped veil, sitting in the garden surrounded by their children in short jackets and tight-fitting caps and attended by their courtiers, dwarfs, servants and dogs. The scene is, as it were, a page torn out of the court life of Mantua in the fifteenth century, and nothing can excel the lifelike character of the heads, or the truth with which the vigorous profiles of the Marquis and his spouse, the demure faces of the children and the details of their stiff costumes, is rendered. In the decoration of the ceiling, the painter, released from the obligations of portraiture, has allowed his fancy free play, and the charming group of boy-angels over the doorway and laurel-wreathed medallions of the vault form a marked contrast to the solemn forms and quaint costumes below. The centre of the dome is painted to represent a circular opening of blue sky, surrounded by a balustrade upon which a peacock and basket of fruit are resting. Two women, a negro girl and an Italian maiden wearing a jewelled head-dress, look down over the edge of the parapet, and laughing genii are at play on the fretted stonework. These are the famous figures "*che scortano di sotto in sù*" which, Vasari tells us, excited general admiration in Mantegna's time, and which, in days to come, were to supply Correggio with a new principle of ceiling decoration.

Lodovico Gonzaga had proved himself a generous and liberal patron, and now marked his

appreciation of Mantegna's last labours by granting him a piece of land near the Porta della Pusterla. Here the painter built himself a fine new house, which he decorated with frescoes and adorned with a valuable collection of antique marbles. Unfortunately his love of splendid undertakings involved him in serious expenses. He was always in debt and constantly addressed querulous letters to his patrons, who, it must be owned, treated him with great kindness and consideration, helping him with gifts of money and land and doing their best to soothe his irritable temper. But, like Michelangelo, Andrea was "gey ill to live with." The most trifling contradictions aroused furious bursts of rage on his part, and led to perpetual disputes with his neighbours and servants. One day he quarrelled with his tailor, another with a gardener and his wife. He next accused his engraver of stealing his plates, and thrashed the luckless man with his own hands. But the worst offender of all was his neighbour, Aliprandi, whom he publicly accused of stealing 500 quinces from his garden. Aliprandi, a citizen of good birth and position, naturally resented the charge and wrote to the Marquis that it was impossible to live at peace with Mantegna, who quarrelled with all of his neighbours and was at that moment engaged in no less than five lawsuits. Federigo Gonzaga, who succeeded his father in 1478, appreciated the painter's worth as much as his father. "The virtue of Andrea," he wrote on one occasion, "is known to the whole world." He repeatedly paid Mantegna's debts and employed him to decorate more than one of those sumptuous villas which have long shared the fate of the other summer palaces round Mantua. His early death, in 1484, was a great loss to the painter, who, fearing to lose his appointment, applied to Lorenzo dei Medici for assistance, and painted the lovely little blue-draped Virgin rocking her babe to sleep, which still adorns the Uffizi, for that magnificent patron. But the young Marquis, Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga, had inherited the traditions of his race, and before long he employed Mantegna to paint the great series of nine tempera paintings, known as "The Triumph of Julius Cæsar," for his new palace of the Pusterla.

This important work was begun in 1486, but two years later the painter was summoned to Rome, where Pope Innocent VIII. desired him to paint a series of frescoes in his newly-erected Belvedere Chapel. Unfortunately these works, which Vasari praises in the highest terms, were destroyed by Pius VI., when he enlarged the Vatican. In 1490, the painter, who had not found the Pope as liberal a patron as the Gonzagas, and was all the while longing to continue his "Triumphs," which he intended to be his best and most perfect works, at length returned to Mantua. Here he worked without intermission at the "Triumphs," which were finally completed in February 1492. After adorning Gian Francesco's palace of the Pusterla for some years, they were removed by his son, Federigo, into a hall in the old Castello, and sold, in 1628, to Charles I. At the sale of that monarch's pictures under the Commonwealth, they were withdrawn by Oliver Cromwell, and afterwards placed by Charles II. in his palace at Hampton Court, where they still remain. Unfortunately the whole series was restored, or rather daubed over, in the reign of William III. by Laguerre, who utterly destroyed the colouring, and in many cases effaced the original outlines, so that little but the design of Mantegna's once splendid work now remains. Yet, irreparably ruined as the "Triumphs" are, it is impossible not to be impressed by the magnificence of the painter's conception. No other work of the Renaissance is so deeply saturated with the

classical spirit. The most intimate knowledge of Roman history is revealed in the details of the long procession of captives, legionaries, trophies of war, priests and colossal gods, ending with Cæsar himself, throned on his triumphal chariot, as he ascends the Via Sacra on his way to the Capitol. And the whole great pageant is ordered with the perfect rhythm and harmony, the severity and restraint of some classic bas-relief. Yet, for all their likeness to an antique frieze, Mantegna's "Triumphs" are no collection of cold marble forms. The figures in the long procession are animated with life and warmth ; their faces glow with human passion and emotion. They are men and women like ourselves, and appeal to us by the instinct of a common humanity. As Goethe said long ago : "The study of the antique supplies the form, nature gives movement and the last touch of life."

The regret we feel at the wanton destruction of this unique and magnificent work is increased because the "Triumphs" belong to a period when Mantegna had attained a richness and beauty of colouring that are never seen in his earlier works. His finest altar-pieces were all painted in these last years of his life : the "Madonna della Vittoria" in 1496, the "Glorified Madonna" of Casa Trivulzi, at Milan, in 1497 ; the fine "Holy Families" of the Dresden Gallery and Mond collection, and the "Madonna and Child" at Bergamo between 1496 and 1500. The two allegories which he painted for Isabella d'Este's *camerino*, at Mantua, were ordered by the young Marchioness in 1493, but not finished till 1497. One represents Minerva and Diana driving out the Vices; in the other we see the Muses dancing on the slopes of Parnassus to the music of Apollo's lyre. The forms are of true classic mould, but the conception is romantic, the colour light and gay, befitting pictures that were to adorn the room of the brightest lady of the Renaissance.

To the end of his life Mantegna was busy with great works. His creative powers found expression not only in tempera painting, but in those admirable drawings and engravings which rank among his finest creations. Many of these represent classical subjects : the "Calumny of Apelles," the "Battle of the Tritons," "Hercules and Antæus"; others, such as the famous "Judith" of the Uffizi, or the "Judgment of Solomon" in the Louvre, are sacred subjects which the artist has treated in classic style. And in the last year of his life his old love for antique bas-relief showed itself in the monochrome of the "Triumph of Scipio," or, as it should rather be called, "Scipio receiving the Mother of the Gods, Cybele," which now adorns the National Gallery. Here the frieze-like shape of the picture, the costumes and modelling of the figures, all recall the "Triumphs" of Hampton Court, and we hear, as it were, the last echo of the great poem that still lingered in his mind.

Unfortunately, the close of the great painter's life, so glorious in the prolonged activity of his creative faculties, was saddened by loss and misfortune. He once more became involved in debt, partly by the misconduct of his son, partly through his own reckless expenditure, and was compelled to sell his beautiful house and live in lodgings. Towards the end of 1505, tired of a homeless life, he bought another house, in the Contrada Unicorno, with borrowed money, and settled there for the winter. Isabella d'Este asked him to paint a Comus, and he had other commissions in hand. But he was ill and failing, and could not work fast enough to satisfy his creditors. In his distress he was forced to part from the most precious of all his antiques, a Roman

bust which he speaks of as *la mia cara Faustina*. It cost him a bitter pang to let his treasure go, and Jacopo Calandra, the servant whom Isabella d'Este had charged to secure the bust at the lowest price possible, wrote to tell his mistress that the old painter had given the precious marble into his hands with the greatest reluctance, adding, "If he were not to see it again for six days, I feel convinced he would die." The words came true sooner than the writer expected. Andrea was already ill at the time, and six weeks later he died, on the 13th of September, 1506. Among the works in his studio at the time were the "Scipio" which had been ordered by Francesco Cornaro of Venice, and the famous *Cristo in scurto*, or foreshortened Christ of the Brera, one of those daring feats of perspective in which the great master took delight, and which he had always refused to sell. Francesco Gonzaga was away from Mantua at the time, and Isabella was too much engaged with political affairs to grieve over the great painter's death, and merely remarked in a letter to her husband: "You know that Messer Andrea died suddenly a few days after you left us." But one of her correspondents, the accomplished Venetian, Lorenzo di Pavia, paid a more fitting tribute to his memory. "I grieve deeply," he wrote to Isabella, "for the loss of our Messer Andrea Mantegna, for in truth a most excellent painter—another Apelles, I may say—is gone from us. But I believe that God will employ him elsewhere on some great and beautiful work. For my part, I know that I shall never again see so fine an artist."

GIOVANNI BELLINI

1428–1516

GIOVANNI BELLINI, the greatest Venetian painter of the fifteenth century, was born in Venice about the year 1428. His father, Jacopo Bellini, had been apprenticed to Gentile da Fabriano, whom he followed to Florence in 1422, and whose name he gave to his eldest son. Jacopo himself was a painter of remarkable originality, and has left us a proof of his great powers in the sketch-books which are preserved in the British Museum and the Louvre. From 1444 to 1460, he made his home at Padua, where his sons worked as assistants in his *atelier*, and his daughter married Andrea Mantegna. Soon after 1460, the Bellini returned to Venice, where Jacopo died in 1466, and his sons became the leaders of the Venetian school. From the first their works reveal an entirely distinct tendency. Gentile, who had a strong realistic bent, devoted himself chiefly to the representation of historical scenes and public pageants, and paid especial attention to contemporary life and manners, while Giovanni breathed a new spirit into the old subjects, and painted Madonnas and Christs with a beauty of form and poetry of feeling unknown to the early Venetian school. All through the career of this great master we trace a steady and continual progress, a growing mastery of means and deepened power of expression which reached its full development in the works that he painted when he was past eighty. Both the altar-pieces which Jacopo and his sons executed at Padua, and those which Giovanni painted for churches and confraternities during the first year of his residence in Venice, have perished, and the earliest works that we have from his hand are a group of Pietàs and scenes from the Passion that were probably painted between 1465 and 1470. Three of these pictures are in the Museo Civico, and one in the National Gallery. This last is the extremely interesting little work called "The Blood of the Redeemer," a figure of Christ bearing the Cross and displaying the sacred wounds, while a kneeling angel receives the blood that drops from his pierced side. The mystic feeling of this little picture is further developed in the touching Pietà of the Brera, and the fine "Agony in the Garden" which adorns our national collection. This picture, like many of Bellini's early works, was long ascribed to Mantegna, with whose "Christ on the Mount of Olives," in the same gallery, it should be compared. The kneeling Christ in both works is borrowed from a drawing

in Jacopo Bellini's sketch-book, and proves the close connection that existed between the two great North Italian masters in these early days. But the austerity of the Paduan artist is already softened by the Venetian's love of natural beauty, and Giovanni's poetic feeling appears in the solemn twilight effect and rich sunset glow of the western sky. Another Pietà, in Morelli's opinion the finest of all Bellini's renderings of his favourite subject, was painted at Rimini for Sigismondo Malatesta, who died in 1468; and a different representation of the theme with the "Virgin and S. John" is in the Ducal Palace at Venice, and formerly bore the date of 1472. Two later Pietàs of rare beauty and pathos, in which the dead Christ is supported by sorrowing angels, are also to be seen, the one at Berlin, the other in the Mond collection. All the finest qualities of this painter's grave and noble art are present in these works, and our thoughts are raised above the bitterness of human sorrow by the loveliness of the angel heads and the majesty of the dead Christ.

Early in his career, Giovanni Bellini began to paint those half-length Virgins, which in their union of severity and tenderness, their simple and motherly feeling, are perhaps more beautiful than those of any other master. Among the earliest are the Madonna of S. Maria dell' Orto, the Virgin in the Brera with the Greek inscription, and the picture exhibited by D. Richter at the New Gallery in 1495, which, together with others at Bergamo and Venice, still recall Mantegna's types and colouring. All of these, like the Paduan master's works, are painted in tempera, and it was only towards 1480 that Bellini adopted the use of oils, which Antonello da Messina had introduced in Venice a few years before. The "Transfiguration at Naples," a picture remarkable for its rich and poetic landscape, is said to have been one of Bellini's first efforts in this direction, while we have another example in the large and imposing "Coronation," which he painted in S. Francesco of Pesaro.

At this period of his career, Giovanni Bellini was first employed upon public works. His brother Gentile had already been engaged by the State, in 1474, to renovate the frescoes originally painted by Gentile de Fabriano and Pisanello in the hall of the Great Council; but in 1479, he was sent to Constantinople at the request of the Sultan, Mahomet II., and Giovanni was employed in his stead. In recognition of his services to the State, he was promised the patent of broker in the Salt office of the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, a valuable post which he held for many years; and in 1483, he was appointed official painter to the Republic, "*Pictor nostri Domini.*" After Gentile's return in 1481, the two brothers worked together at a series of large oil paintings representing the victories of the Republic over Barbarossa, all of which perished when the hall was burnt down in 1577. These great works upon which Giovanni was engaged until his death, and in which he had the help of a number of scholars and assistants, henceforth occupied most of the painter's time, but, fortunately, for posterity, he contrived to undertake many other commissions, and produced important works which have escaped the melancholy fate that befell the paintings of the Ducal Palace. Two of his finest altar-pieces, the pictures in the Sacristy of S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari and in S. Pietro Martire at Murano, bear the date of 1488, while a third, formerly in the Church of S. Giobbe and now in the Academy of Venice, was evidently painted about the same time. In these magnificent compositions we see the great Venetian master in the fulness of his powers. The calm loveliness of the Mother and Child, and the exquisite charm of the child-angels

playing mandolines or piping on the steps of the throne, are heightened by the glowing colours of the draperies and their surroundings of rich Renaissance architecture and sunny landscapes. The Murano altar-piece was ordered by the Doge Agostino Barbarigo, who at his death in the year 1501, left it to the Convent of S. Maria degli Angeli, where his two daughters had taken the veil, and his own figure is introduced kneeling at the feet of the Virgin. This reminds us that Giovanni Bellini was one of the first Venetian artists who set the fashion of painting independent portraits, and attained great reputation in this branch of art. Pietro Bembo not only himself sat to Bellini for his pictures but made the portrait which Giovanni painted of his mistress the subject of a sonnet, in which he extols the master's art to the skies. In his capacity as broker of the Fondaco, it was Bellini's office to paint portraits of the Doges, but the hall of the Ducal Palace, which contained this interesting collection, was destroyed in the great fire, and of all the illustrious Venetians who sat to him in turn, the only one whose portrait remains is the Doge Leonardo Loredano. The grand figure in the brocaded robe and peaked white cap is familiar to us all, and we need only compare it with Leopardi's bronze effigy of the same Doge to see how true and lifelike is Bellini's portrait of the fine old man. Many of the well-known Madonnas, either alone or with attendant Saints, which adorn the Venetian Academy and other galleries belong to the early years of the sixteenth century. There is no falling off in any of these. Often as the same theme is repeated, Bellini's Madonnas are never affected or formal, never weak and insipid. On the contrary, both his sense of beauty and religious feeling only seem to deepen as the years go on. But a large number of inferior productions were sent out from his shop by his numerous assistants, among whom were many excellent workmen, such as Bissolo, Catena, and Rondinelli, who imitated their master's style, and placed his signature on their pictures. Almost all the great Venetian masters of the sixteenth century were at one time or other working in his studio, and even artists like Marco Basaiti, who had belonged to the rival school of the Vivarini, joined Bellini after their own master's death.

To the last, Giambellini retained his old vigour of hand and brain. The curious Allegory of the Tree of Life in the Uffizi and the small painting in the Academy of Venice, which originally decorated a set of walnut-wood *cassoni* in the possession of his scholar, Catena, are of especial interest, as marking a new development in the aged master's style. In poetic conception and delicacy of colouring, they are as it were a foretaste of Giorgione's art. The great picture of the Enthroned Madonna, which he painted in 1505, for S. Zaccaria, is a wonderful achievement for a man of seventy-seven, and in imposing grandeur and faultless workmanship deserves to rank among the masterpieces of the Venetian Renaissance. Mr. Ruskin was not far wrong when he pronounced this altar-piece and the Madonna in the Frari to be the two best pictures in the world. That winter, Albert Dürer came to Venice, and wrote back to his friend, Pirkheimer, that "Messer Sambellini was very old, but still the best painter." The Nürnberg stranger, who was regarded with suspicion by the Venetians, and had been warned not to eat and drink with Italian artists, was delighted at the warmth and courtesy of the great master's reception. "He praised me before many people, came himself to return my visit, and begged me to paint a picture for him, promising that I should be well paid."

In 1507, Gentile Bellini died, leaving Giovanni his father's sketch-book of 1430 as his most precious possession, and begging this brother, to whom he was deeply attached, to finish the large picture of the "Preaching of S. Mark," upon which he was engaged. Giovanni faithfully fulfilled the task, and the portraits of both the brothers—Gentile in a suit of gold brocade with his knight's collar, and Giovanni in a crimson robe—may be seen among the crowd of people listening to the words of the Evangelist. Three years later, he painted the Madonna of the Brera and the Baptism of Christ in S. Corona at Vicenza, in which the admirable modelling of the figures is as striking as the richness of the colour, and the reverent action of the waiting angels agrees with the grave majesty of the Christ. In 1513, he painted one more great altar-piece for the church of S. Giovanni Crisostomo. Here S. Augustine and the giant S. Christopher, bearing the Child-Christ on his shoulder, are both introduced; while S. Jerome, who is represented reading a book which rests on the gnarled boughs of a fig-tree, appears as the type of a grand and peaceful age like the painter's own. In these last works all the fruits of the aged master's experience seem to be gathered up. The golden tones of colour, the solemn and tender feeling, above all the heightened beauty of the landscape, and the loving care with which each tree and flower in the rich Italian vegetation is reproduced, are the natural expression of his serene old age, and of the quiet evening that was closing on his long and glorious life.

He died on the 29th of November, 1516, and the Venetian historian, Marino Sanudo, records in his diary how Messer Zuan Bellini, the most excellent painter in Italy, breathed his last, and was buried in the same grave as his brother, Gentile, in the church of S. Zanipolo.

CARLO CRIVELLI

1430–1493

ALL we know of Carlo Crivelli's history is that he was born in Venice—probably soon after 1430—and that, some five-and-thirty years later, he settled at Ascoli, in the March of Ancona, where the remainder of his life was spent. He was knighted by King Ferdinand II. of Naples, when that prince visited Ascoli, in 1490. On this occasion, we read in a document still preserved at Ascoli, his Highness observing the devotion and faithfulness of the city, and the excellent qualities of Messer Carlo, took him into his service and gave him the honour of knighthood. After this the painter adopted the signature of *Carolus Crivellus, Venetus Miles*, and, on one of his pictures, describes himself as *Eques laureatus*. The exact date of his death is unknown, but his last work bears the date of 1493.

Fortunately the history of his artistic development is as clear as that of his life is vague and obscure. His works are almost always signed and generally dated, and there can be no doubt as to the sources from which his art was derived. He was evidently trained in the school of the Vivarini, at Murano, where he must have been the contemporary and fellow-pupil of Alvise Vivarini and, like that distinguished artist, studied later at Padua. His affinities with the Squarcionesque school are plainly seen in his early works, his children recall Donatello's types, and the energy of his line at times rivals that of Mantegna himself.

A few of Crivelli's works are still to be found in the churches and towns of the Marches, for which they were originally painted. The earliest of all, a picture dated 1468, is now in the Municipio, at Massa Fermana; a charming Madonna of 1470 is in the library at Macerata; while a splendid altar-piece of the Madonna and Saints, with a lunette of the Pietà, is still preserved in the Cathedral of Ascoli, and bears the date of 1473. But by far the greater number of this painter's works have found their way into foreign galleries. The Lateran collection has a Madonna of 1482; the Vatican possesses one of his tragic Pietàs; the Berlin Gallery owns the noble Madonna, with the kneeling S. Peter and six other saints, which was formerly at Dudley House, and belongs to his most characteristic and imposing works. The Louvre has a figure of S. Bernardino, dated 1477, with two tiny donors kneeling at his feet, while the Brera contains no less

than five excellent paintings by his hand, including a superb triptych of the Madonna and Saints, with the Child grasping a bird in both hands, and his last great "Coronation." But no place in the world is as rich in Crivelli's works as London. Eight of his best pictures are in the National Gallery, one graceful little Madonna belongs to the Jones collection at South Kensington Museum, and ten others are to be found in different private galleries. Every phase of the master's curious and interesting art can be studied here. First of all, we have the early Madonnas belonging to Sir Francis Cook and Lord Northbrook, Mr. Benson's little Virgin of 1472, and Mr. Samuel's delightful picture of S. George and the Dragon, which may be ascribed to the same period. The splendid altar-piece from S. Domenico of Ascoli, which was formerly in the Demidoff collection, and now adorns the National Gallery, bears the date of 1476, and was evidently painted to commemorate a decree of Pope Sixtus IV., regarding the observance of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which was accordingly celebrated that year with great solemnity at Ascoli. Here the Madonna is seated on a marble throne with the Child sleeping in her lap, and twelve figures of single saints, distinguished by the richness of their robes and the vigorous character of the heads, in separate niches. The well-known "Annunciation," which is reproduced in these pages, and originally came from a convent at Ascoli, was painted ten years later, while both the Madonna of the Swallow (1491) and the Virgin from the Malatesta Chapel at Rimini (1492) belong to the master's last days.

In all of these works we see the same curious union of severity of drawing with sumptuous decoration that was peculiar to the Paduan school. The forms are sculpturesque, the modelling is often harsh and even repulsive, but the architecture and other accessories are of the most elaborate description, and gold and silver are freely used. The draperies are studded with pearls and jewels, and embossed with gold, the mitres of the Bishops, and the keys of S. Peter are in gilt relief, and not only variegated marbles and festoons of fruit and flowers, but Turkey carpets and majolica vases, birds, and peacocks are introduced. All through his career, Crivelli kept strictly to the old models, and from first to last his style underwent little change. He often painted on a gold ground and retained the traditional types and grouping of the Murano schools. But a vein of vigorous realism runs through all his works, and the strong individuality of the man reveals itself in the varied character of his heads and in the force and passion of his Pietàs. The tender little picture of the dead Christ supported by sorrowing angels recalls the moving conceptions of Giovanni Bellini, whose fondness for this subject Crivelli seems to have shared, while in the Pietà of the Dudley collection, now Mr. Crawshay's property, and the still finer one of 1485, in the Panciatichi Gallery at Florence, the vehemence and intensity of feeling remind us of Mantegna. Another striking feature of Crivelli's works is their brilliancy of colouring and admirable state of preservation. Like Mantegna, this Venetian master never attempted the use of oils, but painted exclusively in tempera, and his colour has resisted the ravages of time and retained its smooth and bright enamelled surface in an extraordinary degree. And, together with this love of rich and splendid colour, Crivelli possessed a sense of decorative design which has been equalled by few Italian artists, and which finds expression in the elegance as well as the profusion of his ornament, and in the dainty prettiness of his Madonna faces.

Crivelli never seems to have returned to Venice, but spent the remainder of his life at Ascoli. Among the latest works we have from his hand are two pictures in the Brera. One of these is a single figure of the enthroned Madonna, with a lighted taper and pot of lilies before her, in the act of giving the Child a pear, which is signed *Karolus Crivellus eques laureatus.* The other is the grand " Coronation of the Virgin," which was originally in a Franciscan church at Fabriano, and bears the date of 1493. This altar-piece with its choir of angels and six attendant saints, and lunette of the Pietà above, betrays no sign of failing powers but, on the contrary, deserves to rank among the painter's finest works.

ALVISE VIVARINI

1430–1503

ALVISE, or Luigi, Vivarini was the last and most illustrious master of the old Murano school, and worthily upheld the traditions of the race from which he sprang, at a time when the rival school of the Bellini were supreme in Venice. He was the nephew of Bartolommeo Vivarini, from whom his style was derived, and was probably born about 1430, as in 1464 he was already of sufficient note to be employed at the same time as Giovanni Bellini in the Scuola di S. Girolamo. The same Squarcionesque influence which is apparent in the works of his uncle and of his fellow-pupil Crivelli, makes itself felt in the early pictures of Alvise. His first dated work, the altar-piece of 1475, at Montefiorentino, a Franciscan monastery in the upper valley of the Foglia, bears a close relation to both the Muranese and Paduan school. The general composition follows the old Murano tradition, the forms are lean and angular, the Child recalls Crivelli's types, and the saints share his intensity of expression. A great advance is visible in the Madonna of 1480, in the Venice Academy. The saints are no longer set in separate niches, but are all brought together in one and the same picture, and gaze with deep devotion on the Virgin who with outstretched hand proclaims the tale of her Son's wondrous birth. Here Alvise already displays a skill in the treatment of perspective and light and shade that is far in advance of his predecessors, while he reveals his dramatic powers in the gesture and expression of the actors. In the Vienna altar-piece of 1489, the Child is represented lying asleep on His mother's knee while boy-angels make music at her feet, a motive which is repeated with greater charm and softer colouring in the lovely Madonna of the Redentore, long ascribed to Giovanni Bellini, but now generally recognised as Alvise's work. The grand altar-piece at Berlin, with its stately domed portico and elaborately decorated throne, was probably painted soon after 1490, while the "Resurrection" at S. Giovanni in Bragora, and the "Santa Giustina" in the Bagati collection, at Milan, belong to the painter's last years. The defective structure and want of proportion in the figure of Santa Giustina shows that Alvise remained far behind the Bellini in drawing and anatomy, but the majesty of her pose and the lovely oval of her face are conceived in a spirit worthy of Giorgione. The same poetic imagination, the same

soft colouring appears in the noble form of the risen Christ standing triumphant on the tomb, while the glad surprise on the faces of the waking guards, and the rich sunset glow in the sky, foreshadow the dawn of the new age, and show that Alvise was not insensible to the influences of the sixteenth century.

In 1488, Alvise Vivarini addressed a petition to the Doge, praying to be allowed a share in the decoration of the council hall, and offering to paint a picture in oils on canvas, in the method employed by the brothers Bellini, if the State would defray his expenses. His request was granted, and he set to work on this honourable task in the following year; but the two historical compositions which he executed shared the fate of the Bellinis' works in the ducal palace, and perished in the fire of 1577. The last picture which he ever painted was the Frari altar-piece of S. Ambrogio sitting enthroned under a richly decorated tribune, with eight other saints below, and angels playing mandolines on the steps of the throne. This sumptuous work is especially remarkable for its elaborate architecture and for the admirable perspective always noticeable in Alvise's works, and which is especially mentioned by Vasari as a striking feature of his paintings in the Doge's palace. But before the altar-piece was completed Alvise died, and the work which he had begun in 1503, was finished by his scholar, Marco Basaiti, as we learn from the inscription on the picture: *Quod Vivarine tua fatali sorte nequisti Marcus Basitus nobile prompsit opus.*

Like his great rivals, Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, Alvise Vivarini painted many admirable portraits; among others, the vigorous and expressive head in the Bonomi-Cereda Gallery at Milan, signed and dated 1497, and the magnificent bust of Bernardo di Salla in the Louvre. This last-named work, together with the somewhat similar portrait of a man feeding a hawk, at Windsor Castle, and several others in different collections, formerly passed under the names of other artists, but have been restored to their true author by Mr. Berenson, who has devoted especial attention to the Murano painters, and whose chapter on Alvise is the best contribution that has been hitherto made to the study of this last and greatest of the Vivarini.

VITTORE CARPACCIO

1440–1523

VITTORE CARPACCIO, or Scarpaccia, as he is called in contemporary records, was a native of Capo d'Istria, who came to Venice in early youth, and spent the rest of his life in the city of the lagoons. The year of his birth is unknown, but since he is mentioned as working in the Scuola di S. Girolamo with Giovanni Bellini and Alvise Vivarini, in 1464, he must have been born about 1440. He was the scholar and assistant of Gentile Bellini, and is supposed to have accompanied his master to Constantinople in 1479, a circumstance which the frequent introduction of Oriental costumes in his compositions seems to render probable. But the first of his works to which a date can be assigned is the votive picture, now in the National Gallery, of the Doge Giovanni Mocenigo kneeling before the Virgin, and imploring her deliverance from the plague which ravaged Venice in 1478. Unfortunately the picture has suffered from restoration, the figures are heavy and awkward, and the colour has lost its brightness. Another of Carpaccio's early works is the curious picture of "Two Courtesans," with their pet birds and dogs, in the Museo Civico, which Mr. Ruskin has praised beyond its merits, but which is none the less of great interest as a record of contemporary life. Here we already see the new taste for *genre* painting, that forms so striking a feature of Carpaccio's art, and which is of especial interest to us, as marking the transition from the old religious painting to the art of modern times.

The series which Carpaccio painted between 1490 and 1495, for the Oratory of the Scuola of S. Ursula, now in the Academy of Venice, is the most remarkable example of his powers in this direction. Here the Venetian master reveals himself as a story-teller of the highest order. In these nine subjects of the legend of the Christian princess, he brings before us, in the most vivid and picturesque manner, the life of Venice as it was in those brilliant days. He shows us not only the splendour of her palaces, the rich costumes of her citizens, their stately water pageants, and procession of gondolas and barges on the lagoons, but the interior of Venetian homes, and the familiar scenes of every-day life: the maiden sleeping in her quiet chamber, where the sunlight falls on the flower-pots in the window, and the prayer-desk at her bedside; or the young bride about to leave

home with her affianced husband, kneeling to receive her father's blessing, while friends and servants press round, and her mother wipes away a silent tear. All this, and much more, the painter sets before us, with a brightness and gaiety of colour, a skilful treatment of light and shade, and a simple and natural pathos that lend rare charm to his tale.

Another series of ten scenes from the lives of S. George, S. Jerome, and S. Tryphonius, the patron Saints of Dalmatia, was painted by Carpaccio, between 1502 and 1511, for the ancient Scuola or Confraternity, founded by Dalmatian merchants living in Venice for the relief of distressed sailors. These pictures, which still adorn the walls of the little oratory known to us as the "Shrine of the Slaves," display the same poetic invention, the same lifelike action and wealth of architectural surroundings as the story of S. Ursula, but have suffered still more severely from repainting, and can only be seen with difficulty in the dimly lighted chapel where they hang. The best of the series are the first and last. In the one, S. George, a youthful and golden-haired knight, rides full tilt at the fearful dragon, while Princess Sabra kneels on the hillside, and the spires and minarets of an Eastern city gleam in the setting sun. In the other, S. Jerome is seen writing in the study, surrounded by folios and manuscripts, with a row of bronze statuettes and antiques on the shelf behind him, and a long-haired white dog on the floor at his feet. Both are characteristic examples of the painter in his happiest vein. The one has all the charm of faery romance; the other is one of those quiet, home-like scenes which he delights to render, and seems to reflect the tranquil and scholarly lives of such learned Venetians as Aldo Manuzio and his friends.

Four other pictures, belonging to a third series, which Carpaccio painted between 1511 and 1515, for the Scuola di Stefano, are still to be seen in different European galleries. The "Calling of S. Stephen" is at Berlin, his "Dispute with the Pharisees" is in the Brera at Milan, and his "Martyrdom" at Stuttgart, while the finest of the group, the "Preaching of the Saint," is now in the Louvre. Another picture, which Carpaccio executed as one of a series commenced by Gentile Bellini for the Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista, is in the Academy of Venice. Here the Patriarch of Grado is seen healing a demoniac with a relic of the True Cross, and the old wooden bridge of the Rialto is introduced in the background.

During many years of his life, Carpaccio worked as Gentile Bellini's assistant in the Ducal Palace, and, in 1501, himself painted one of the large historical compositions in the Council Hall, a picture of Pope Alexander III. celebrating Mass in S. Mark's, which perished with the rest of the series in the great fire. Seven years later, he was chosen, at Giovanni Bellini's recommendation, to value the frescoes painted by Giorgione on the walls of the Fondaco de' Tedeschi. In 1510, he finished his admirable altar-piece of the "Presentation" for the church of S. Giobbe, which Bellini had already adorned with one of his finest Madonnas, and two years earlier he executed the "Death of the Virgin" in the Duomo of Ferrara. One other noble work, the altar-piece of S. Vitale in full armour, mounted on his charger, in front of a loggia with a group of Saints standing on the balcony, and a wide landscape opening beyond, in the church of S. Vitale at Venice, was ordered by the Prior of the

Convent, Giovanni Luciani, in 1513, and bears the signature, "Victor Charpatius, MDXIIII." But the painter's later works, the "Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Virgins," and the "Meeting of Joachim and Anna," which he painted in 1515 for a Treviso church, and is now in the Academy of Venice, show a marked decline of power, and betray the feebleness of advancing years. We have no record of Carpaccio's death, but as he was still living in 1523, he evidently reached a good old age, and rivalled the length of days attained by the other great Venetians, Gian Bellini and Titian.

GIORGIONE

1478–1510

THE old city of Castelfranco, in the pleasant district of Treviso, that *contrada giocosa et amorosa* where the rich Venetians had their villas and gardens and held their feasts and jousts in the long summer days, was the birthplace of Giorgione. The waters of the moat that sleep under the grim old walls, the mediæval towers and battlements all belong to his pictures. His, too, are the steep gables of the straggling farmhouses, the streams which flow down from the hills, and the luxuriant foliage of the plains, the grassy slopes where the dying sunlight lingers and the mountains lift their snowy crests against the northern sky. Here, in this lovely region, which lives again in his art, Giorgione was born, in 1478. His mother was a peasant maiden, and the fable of his connection with the noble family of the Barbarelli was not invented until a hundred years after his death. Vasari tells us that his family were of the humblest class, and he was always known to his contemporaries as Zorzo da Castelfranco. When still very young, he came to Venice, then at the moment of her greatest splendour, and studied in the workshop of Giovanni Bellini, with Titian and Palma as his companions. The peasant boy of Castelfranco was singularly handsome, with flowing locks and dark dreamy eyes, and there was a charm about him which no one could resist. He sang and played the lute with rare skill and soon became as distinguished in the school of music at the Rialto as in the *atelier* of the Bellini. A true Venetian in his frank enjoyment of youth and pleasure, Giorgione flung himself into the joyous life around him with passionate delight, and soon became a striking figure in that brilliant society. But if he loved the company of fair women, he loved his art better. "He was equally ardent in his studies," says Vasari, "and was so enamoured of beauty in nature that he would only draw from life and represent all that was fairest in the world around him." Venice soon awoke to a sense of the young painter's greatness and hailed his genius with a sudden burst of enthusiasm. Words failed the old writers who strove to express their admiration for the exuberance of life and beauty in Giorgione's creations, for the wealth of his fancy, and the magic of his poetry. They were driven to coin new words in order to express their meaning and the "*fuoco Giorgionesco*" became a common term.

The originality of the young master's genius made itself felt in every direction. Whatever he touched, he invested with new forms and meaning. He began, we are told, by painting sacred subjects. "The Trial of the child Moses by fire before Pharaoh," the "Judgment of Solomon" in the Uffizi, are the earliest works we have from his hand, and were painted in all probability when he was seventeen or eighteen. They closely resemble the allegory of the "Tree of Life" by Giovanni Bellini, which hangs beside them, and recall that aged master's style. But the sacred subject is already treated in a secular and idyllic manner; the slender forms have that touch of highborn grace peculiar to Giorgione, and the soft radiance of summer afternoon illumines the tall feathery trees and castellated heights of the background. This sense of a new power in art is yet more present in the picture at Casa Loschi in Vicenza, a figure of Christ, turning a look of infinite love and compassion upon us, as he bears his Cross on the way to Calvary. Here the young painter of Castelfranco already attains an ideal of human tenderness and divine majesty beyond the highest efforts of older masters. The great Madonna which he painted in the church of his native city of Castelfranco, about the year 1504, marks a fresh stage of development. Here the old theme is treated in an altogether new and original manner. The Virgin throned high above the altar, with the eastern carpet at her feet and the white light quivering over valley and sea beyond, is quite unlike any of Bellini's conceptions. There is a freedom in the whole conception, in the very human Babe who rests on the Mother's arms, in the careless attitude of the young soldier S. Liberale, and the speaking gestures of the holy Francis, in the crumpled draperies and the fantastic patterns of the embroidered hangings of the Virgin's robe, which could only have been inspired by genius of the boldest and most daring type. The same lovely and serene countenance, the same woodland landscape and rich colour, the same striking individuality of attitude and expression, are seen in the fine altar-piece of the Madonna with S. Roch and S. Anthony of Padua at Madrid, which Morelli was the first to recognise as a genuine work of Giorgione. Another Christ bearing the cross, now irreparably ruined, was painted by him for the church of S. Rocco, and is mentioned by Vasari as being a favourite object of devotion in his days, and bringing more offerings to the church than all the gold which Giorgione and Titian had earned during their lifetime! As a portrait painter, Giorgione early attained the highest reputation, and Vasari, who saw his portraits of Caterina Cornaro and Doge Loredano, of the great Captain Gonsalvo di Cordova, and other celebrated personages, when he visited Venice in 1544, avers that in this branch of art, he excelled not only all other Venetians, but every artist in Italy. Of these wonderful works which Vasari describes in such glowing language, not one remains, and with the single exception of the sad-faced poet Antonio Brocardo, whose likeness has been discovered at Buda Pesth, all the portraits which have come down to us, are those of unknown persons. There is the beautiful youth with the mass of thick wavy locks at Berlin, an evidently early work, and the gentle matron of the Borghese, and there is the noble Knight of Malta, in the Uffizi, with the gleaming armour and the mournful look in his eyes, a sadly injured but undoubtedly genuine work.

Another branch of art to which Giorgione devoted much of his time was fresco-painting. He adorned his own house in the Campo di S. Silvestro, near the Rialto, with a frieze of musicians and poets and groups of children, and decorated many Venetian palaces with allegorical figures and

mythological subjects. And in 1505, he was chosen to paint the frescoes on the façade of the newly rebuilt Fondaco de' Tedeschi, or Hall of the foreign merchants on the Grand Canal. These frescoes, which included a colossal figure of Justice and a grand procession of horsemen, surrounded with a frieze of medallions, were completed by the summer of 1507, and valued by Carpaccio and two other painters at 150 ducats. The Signoria, however, hesitated to pay the price fixed, and Giorgione, whose independence of character and indifference to wealth or station seems to have been well known, was content to accept the smaller sum of 130 ducats. The best proof of the complete satisfaction which his frescoes gave the Signoria, is to be found in the fresh commission which he received to paint a large picture on canvas for the Sala dell' Udienza in the Ducal Palace. But this composition has been lost if it was ever executed, and the frescoes with which he decorated both public and private buildings have all been destroyed by exposure to the sun and sea-air. So, too, have the panels perished which Vasari saw in 1544, the youthful David with the long locks falling on his shoulders, which the artist painted from his own image, the angel, "*bello quanto si può fare*," which he gave his friend, the Patriarch of Aquileia, and the S. George, whose knightly form was reflected alike in the glittering shield hanging on the tree at his side, and in the clear pool of water at his feet. Gone, too, are the twelve panels of the story of Psyche, which Ridolfi describes, and the many subjects from the Metamorphoses of Ovid and other classical poems with which he loved to decorate *cassoni* and furniture. Out of all the wondrous *fantasie* which he painted in the last year of his life, some five or six much damaged pictures are all that are now left to console us for the loss of so many priceless works.

Yet these few paintings are of such rare and exquisite perfection, that the pleasure we feel in their contemplation remains one of the best joys of life. No artist was ever gifted with a finer sense of form and beauty of line than Giorgione. We need only recall the white-limbed, admirably modelled women who draw water at the marble fountain, where shepherds pipe in the golden evening, or the matchless Venus who sleeps in the green meadow, under the sunlit heights of Castelfranco. By the side of that sleeping form in her perfect refinement and purity all other goddesses pale. Even Titian's "Antiope" and Correggio's "Danaë" have a taint of earthliness compared with this divine "Venus," which Marcantonio Michieli and Ridolfi saw in Marcello's house at Venice, and which, three hundred years later, Morelli discovered hidden under a false name and a coat of paint at Dresden. And, together with this classical feeling for beauty of line, Giorgione had a love of romance and an intensity of passion which the Greeks never knew. The very soul of yearning meets us in the eyes of his men and women, whether their minds are saddened by perpetual regret, or vexed with longing for a good that is out of reach. In that beautiful "Shepherd," playing on his flute, at Hampton Court, which is the only Giorgione now in England, he makes us feel the entrancing power of music, and hear those wondrous melodies that haunted his brain all his life long. And as with music and love, so with all that is fairest in nature or noblest in man. Whatever heightens the enjoyment of the passing hour and stirs the pulses with a quickened sense of life, finds a place in Giorgione's art. The gleam that rests for a moment on the grass and is gone, the look that comes but once into a man's eyes, are the things upon which he loves to seize. Closely blended with this high sense of romance, is that feeling for

natural beauty which is so prominent in his later works. He sets his Greek myths in idyllic landscapes, and paints Apollo pursuing Daphne, or Evander showing Eneas the site of Rome, in fair woodland scenes or sunny meadows. "He loved fresh verdure, running waters and breezy airs," says an old Venetian writer, and when he dreamt of Paradise, he painted the green fields and forest shades of Castelfranco.

But it is not only that Giorgione takes us to Arcady, and shows us the shepherds piping on the banks of clear streams, and happy lovers resting in shady bowers. It is that he was the first to anticipate that essentially modern principle of the intimate relation which exists between the joys and sorrows of man and the changing moods and seasons of the natural world. We have a striking instance of this in the wonderful little landscape of the Palazzo Giovanelli, described by Marcantonio Michiel, when he saw it in 1530, at the house of Gabriel Vendramini, as "*El paesetto in la tempesta, con la Zingara e il Soldato.*" The story, as Professor Wickhoff has shown, is borrowed from an incident in the Thebaïs of the Latin poet, Statius. The youth in purple brocade, with the long staff in his hand, is King Adrastus of Thebes, who went out to seek water for his thirsty people, and the gipsy-mother on the opposite bank of the stream is the exiled Queen, Hypsipyle of Lemnos. The sunlight sleeps on the grassy slopes where the dark-eyed princess rests, but the sky is black behind the tall trees, and a flash of lightning is seen on the edge of the thunder cloud. There is infinite skill in the different gradations of light, from the sun-filled air of the foreground to the darkened sky in the distance, infinite art in this contrast between the idyllic peace of the summer day and the blackness of the coming storm. Nature, we feel, is in harmony with this strange meeting, and the fate of these human beings is closely bound up with her eternal order. No doubt, as Vasari remarks, it is no easy task to explain the meaning of many of Giorgione's pictures. The drama from which he takes his theme is nothing to him. All he cares for is the romantic element of the story which he brings before us, and invests with so rare and intense a meaning. This is evident not only in Prince Giovanelli's "Famiglia," but in the Vienna picture which has been variously described as the "Astrologers," the "Three Philosophers," or the "Chaldæan Sages." But the incident is plainly taken from Virgil, and represents Evander and his young son Pallas showing Eneas the rock of the Capitol and the site of the future city of Rome, as described in the eighth book of the *Æneid.* This picture was one of the two subjects from Virgil, which Michiel saw in 1525, in the house of Taddeo Contarini. Here two bearded men in Eastern dress stand on the edge of a thicket looking out on the distant landscape, while a dark-haired youth with keen eyes and expressive face is seated under the trees, holding a quadrant and compasses in his hand. The autumn woods are already touched with ruddy hues, and through the opening glade we see the sun dropping behind the purple shoulder of a distant mountain. In the foreground are the "wonderfully-painted rocks," of which Marcantonio speaks, fringed with ferns and hanging grasses and a clump of tall trees, already stripped of their leaves, stand out against the fiery red of the evening sky. This was one of the pictures that were left unfinished in the painter's studio at the time of his death, and was completed by his assistant, Sebastiano del Piombo. Titian finished the "Sleeping Venus," and added the Cupid at her feet, which was afterwards removed by a modern restorer, while Paris Bordone completed the magnificent landscape of S. Mark stilling the Tempest, which

now hangs blackened and repainted in the Academy of Venice. Life proved all too short for this great creative artist, and many of his ideas and motives were left to be worked out by other painters. For, in the flower of youth, and at the height of his renown, Giorgione of Castelfranco, died of the plague early in October, 1510. Vasari tells us that he caught the fatal disease from the lips of the woman whom he loved; while a contemporary writer, Federico Dolce, merely records that the great master died of the plague, which carried off twenty thousand citizens in the space of a year. The sad news reached Isabella d'Este at Mantua, and she wrote off hastily to one of her agents at Venice, begging him to secure a "very rare and beautiful" picture of "Night," which she heard had lately been painted by the dead master. On the 25th of October, her correspondent replied that Zorzo da Castelfranco had, it was true, died "more from over-fatigue and exhaustion than from the plague," and that, before his death, he had painted two pictures of twilight landscapes for Contarini and Beccaro, but that neither of these patricians would part with them on any consideration, having had them painted for their own enjoyment. Many years afterwards, the remains of Giorgione were carried to Castelfranco, and buried in the old church, among the green valleys and running waters of his native home, a better resting-place for the most poetic of all painters than great San Zanipolo itself.

PALMA VECCHIO

1480–1528

WE know but very little of the history of this popular master, who stood next to Giorgione and Titian in the public favour of the Venetians, in the early years of the sixteenth century. Vasari only mentions six of his works, and the one accurate piece of information that he has to give is his record of the painter's death, at the early age of forty-eight. According to him, Jacopo Palma, commonly known as Palma Vecchio, to distinguish him from his nephew, Palma Giovine, was born in Venice. But both Ridolfi and Marcantonio Michiel, the writer of the anonymous work of the sixteenth century edited by Jacopo Morelli, who was familiar with the painter's works during his lifetime, tell us that Palma was a native of Bergamo. The truth of their statement has been lately confirmed by the discovery of several documents, of which the most important is the painter's will. From this we learn that Palma was the son of Antonio Nigretti, a native of the village of Serina, or Serinalta, near Bergamo, where the painter was born in 1480. The parish church contains an altar-piece by his hand, and the house in which he lived still goes by the name of "*la 'cà' del pittùr.*" Palma probably went to Venice in his boyhood and worked in Giovanni Bellini's shop, where he became acquainted with Giorgione and Titian. But he paid frequent visits to his mountain home, and painted altar-pieces at Dossena and Peghera in the valley of the Brembo, as well as at Serinalta itself. To the end of his life, his art bore signs of the hardy robustness which he had inherited from his mountain race, and remained more vigorous and imposing, if less refined and intellectual, than that of the other great Venetian masters.

Palma never signed or dated his pictures, but, as his style passed through three successive phases, we are able to determine the chronology of his works with some degree of exactness. During his first period, he followed the orthodox traditions of Venetian art, and painted in the sober and dignified manner of his master, Giovanni Bellini. The finely modelled "Adam and Eve" of the Brunswick Gallery, and the "Woman taken in Adultery" of the Capitol, are good examples of this time, and were both seen at Venice, in 1512, by the Anonimo, in the house of Francesco Zio. In the second or middle period (1512–1520) Palma's style became more fully developed, and displayed

a freedom and splendour of colouring that were plainly the result of his intercourse with Giorgione and Titian. Finally, in his last years (1520–1525) he adopted a broader technique and soft golden tone which often recall Correggio's style, and are recognised as marks of his third or "blonde" manner.

Among the finest works of his maturity are the altar-pieces in S. Stefano at Vicenza, and in S. Maria Formosa at Venice. The first is modelled on the old traditions of the fifteenth century, and represents the Virgin enthroned between S. Lucy and S. George, with a child-angel playing a lute on the steps at her feet, but the sunny landscape of the background and the knightly form of the hero-saint strongly recall Giorgione's altar-piece at Castelfranco. The Venetian picture was painted for the chapel of the Bombadieri of the Arsenal, in S. Maria Formosa, and may have been destined to commemorate the capture of Brescia in 1516. Here the queenly form of S. Barbara in purple robes, with a crown on her head and a palm in her hand, is one of Palma's grandest creations. A third altar-piece, which originally adorned the church of Fontanelle, on the mainland, and is now in the Academy of Venice, represents S. Peter enthroned with an open book on his knee, and six other Saints at his side. To the same period belong the best of those Holy Families, known as "Santa Conversazioni," which Palma was the first to introduce, and which soon became so popular in Venice. These happy groups, resting in sunny meadows or forest glades, with farm-houses perched on the heights above, and blue hills in the distance, naturally appealed to the rich Venetians' taste for country life, and Palma, who had peasant blood in his veins, took especial delight in these pastoral surroundings which recalled the rural scenes of his mountain home. The fashion which he had set was quickly adopted by contemporary artists, and developed on a larger scale by his pupil, Bonifazio Veronese, the true author of the bright and charming "Santa Conversazione," ascribed to Palma, in the National Gallery. One splendid example of this class of composition by Palma's own hand is the "Holy Family" in the Gallery of Naples; another is the well-known "Adoration of the Shepherds" in the Louvre. Here the blue hills of his home are once more seen in the distance, and the shepherd-boy is a true Bergamasque peasant, whose ragged clothes offer a marked contrast to the sumptuous robes of the Venetian lady kneeling at her prayer desk. In both of these pictures, the fine effect of light and shade, as well as a more delicate and refined feeling than is usually apparent in Palma's works, recall the works of Lotto, and remind us that this master spent some years at Bergamo, where he probably met his old friend and companion about this time. But of all these rural scenes, the fairest and most perfect idyll is the "Meeting of Jacob and Rachel" in the Dresden Gallery, a picture long classed among the finest masterpieces of Giorgione's art, but restored by Morelli to its true author. Here rocky heights close in the mountain valley where the lovers meet, and the peasants are washing their sheep at the well, and the cows are feeding in the high pastures, while the shepherd-lad, with his faithful dog at his side, embraces his long-desired Rachel.

Yet a third class of subjects must be named among Palma's works. These are the portraits both of men and women, which, like all his Venetian contemporaries, he painted in large numbers at every period of his career. Chief among his pictures of men is the famous poet of the National Gallery, with the laurel background and the gold chain on his crimson robe, long supposed

to be the portrait of Ariosto by Titian, but in reality, one of Palma's noblest works. The beauties whom he painted, whether under their own names or in the character of Lucrezia and Venus, were mostly Venetian ladies of great houses, such as the Contarini, the Priuli, and Querini who were all among Palma's most liberal patrons. Soon he became the fashionable painter of these large, white-skinned, yellow-haired ladies, who bathed their locks with golden washes, and sat on the roof while their hair dried in the sunshine. Many are the portraits of this type that meet us in public and private galleries. There is the Lucrezia of the Borghese and the Venus of Dresden, a nude woman lying on a white cloth, painted, it must be confessed, with little of Titian's power or of Giorgione's charm. There is the Judith of the Uffizi, which Hawthorne compares to "a fat housewife, stirring a pudding with a wooden spoon," and the "Lady of the Lute" at Alnwick Castle, and the so-called "Bella di Tiziano" of the Sciarra Gallery, in her red mantle, holding the jewel-case in her hand. And there are the Three Sisters or Graces, as they are called, at Dresden, being in reality that group of "three women to the waist, painted from life," which Michiel saw in 1525, at Taddeo Contarini's house. All three have the same full-blown forms, the same placid, comely faces, and the same yellow hair, and are painted in Palma's blondest manner, without much sense of refinement, but not without a certain charm. The Imperial Gallery at Vienna boasts no less than six of Palma's beauties, among them the famous Violante with the violet at her breast and the masses of wavy golden hair, who was so favourite a model with the Venetian masters of that time. But the most fascinating of all these fair women is the maiden at Berlin, whom Palma painted in the days when the spell of Lotto's influence was still upon him. She has the same yellow hair, the same skin of milk and roses; her crimson robe is as rich and her muslin frill as dainty as that of her sisters, but in the yearning gaze of the eyes that meet us as she leans her head wearily on her arm, in the glimpse of blue sky that breaks through the leafy bower, there is a note of refinement and poetry that is seldom found in Palma's art.

Death came to this painter of golden-haired beauties in his prime. He was at the height of his renown, courted by the noblest families in Venice, and caressed by all the ladies who flocked to his studio. Suddenly, while he was painting an altar-piece for the island-church of S. Elena, the brush dropped from his hand, and he was forced to give up his work and leave the pictures to be finished by his clever Bergamasque scholar, Cariani. He lingered on, stricken by a fatal disease, until the summer of 1528, when he became suddenly worse, and on the 28th of July made a will, leaving the bulk of his fortune to the children of his brother Bartolommeo, as well as 20 ducats that were to be distributed among his poor relatives in the territory of Bergamo and in Venice, and desiring that prayers should be said for his soul in the sanctuary of Assisi. A week later he died and was buried on the following day in the vault of the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit, of which he was a member, in the church of S. Gregorio. There were, we are told, upwards of forty pictures left unfinished in his studio at the time of the painter's death.

LORENZO LOTTO

1480–1556

LORENZO LOTTO is one of the most interesting, and at the same time one of the least known, members of that brilliant group of painters who flourished at Venice in the early part of the sixteenth century. The fame of Titian, of Giorgione, and of Palma over-shadowed his reputation during his lifetime, and in later days his name was almost forgotten. But of recent years, attention has been drawn to Lotto's great merits by several writers and an admirable monograph devoted to the subject has given us an exhaustive criticism of the Venetian master's art and personality.

Lotto was born at Venice in 1480, but spent comparatively little of his existence in his native city. All his life he was a wanderer, with no settled home or close family ties. His first important works were painted in the Trevisana, and in the March of Ancona, which remained the chief sphere of his activity throughout his career. An altar-piece of the Virgin and Saints, originally executed in 1508 for the church of San Domenico at Recanati, strongly resembles Alvise Vivarini's style, and justifies Mr. Berenson's contention that Lotto was trained in this master's workshop, and not as Vasari states, in Giovanni Bellini's *atelier*. To the very end of his career, the type of his faces, the structure of his forms, the elaborate architecture which he introduced, and the decorative use of flowers and fruit, recall the style of the Vivarini and the practice of the Murano and Paduan schools. Towards the end of 1508, Lotto visited Rome, and was actually employed in the Vatican during these memorable days when Raphael was painting the Stanze, and Michelangelo was at work in the Sistina. A document in the Corsini Library records that he was paid 100 ducats for a series of frescoes in the upper storey of the Vatican, but it seems doubtful if the work was ever executed. Traces of Raphael's influence however are apparent in works which Lotto painted in 1512, at Jesi and Recanati, and a S. George which Mr. Berenson discovered at the village of Credaro, near Bergamo, is an evident reminiscence of the celestial rider in Raphael's fresco of the Expulsion of Heliodorus.

In 1513, Lotto went to Bergamo and spent the next twelve years executing altar-pieces and portraits in that city and its immediate neighbourhood. This was the most fruitful and prosperous

period of his life, when he first began to display the full extent of his powers. The Madonnas of S. Bartolommeo and S. Bernardino, with their listening saints and charming *putti,* recall Correggio's style by the essentially modern character of their action and sentiment. But sensitive and emotional as Lotto undoubtedly was, he had in reality a far deeper and more serious nature than Allegri. His profound interest in moral problems, his keen sympathy with his fellow creatures, are fully revealed in these wonderful portraits of men and women which rank among his noblest achievements, and which, as interpretations of individual character, have never been surpassed. Many of these are now in England. There is the double portrait of the brothers Della Torre, together with that of the Protonotary Giuliano, with his refined, intellectual face and silvery hair, and the family group with its curiously subtle meaning, in the National Gallery. There is the richly attired Venetian beauty with the strange mystery in her passionate dark eyes, at Dorchester House, and the magnificent portrait of Messer Andrea Odoni, the famous collector, clad in his fur-trimmed robe, and holding his precious antique in his hand, which is one of the glories of Hampton Court. Another double portrait, distinguished by its unconventional character and by a touch of humour rarely found in Venetian art, and which, like most of the preceding works, belongs to Lotto's Bergamasque period, is the Bridal Couple at Madrid, "*Messer Marsilio et la sposa sua, con Cupidineto,*" as the picture is called in the bill sent in by the artist to his wealthy patron, Messer Zanin Casoto of Bergamo. Here the bridegroom, a dull placid youth with a satisfied smile on his broad face, is in the act of placing the ring on the finger of his handsome bride, while a mischievous Cupid flies up behind them, and with a sly glance at Marsilio, lays a laurel-wreathed yoke upon their necks. Even where the subject is plainly unsympathetic, as in the case of the homely, middle-aged woman at Bergamo, or the hard-featured and wrinkled old man in the Brera, Lotto is full of kindness and charity for their failings, and does his utmost to soften their defects and bring out the best side of their character. Some of his later portraits have a pathetic insignificance that is almost overwhelming. Such for instance is the sick man in the Doria Palace, whose brows are contracted with pain, and who seems to struggle for breath, or the noble Venetian of the Borghese, laying his hand on the flower-wreathed skull, that tells of a sorrow too deep for tears.

The same penetrating insight and quick sympathy with all forms of human life are revealed in the sacred pictures of Lotto's later years, together with that sincerely religious feeling and profound interest in spiritual subjects which had marked him from the first. In the charming frescoes which adorn the chapel of Trescorre, near Bergamo, he painted S. Barbara moving among the buyers and sellers in the market-place, and blessing the peasants at work in the harvest field, and displayed his love for child-life in the cherubs sporting in the vine-trellis on the roof, and in the small boy who pulls the bishop's gold-embroidered chasuble at the most solemn moment of the Mass. And in his Annunciation at Recanati he represents the Virgin starting up from her prayer-desk in surprise at the yellow-haired angel who has alighted on the terrace outside her bedroom, and shows us the frightened cat bounding across the floor with arched back and bristling tail. Another work of this period which has many points in common with the Recanati picture and was probably also painted in 1528, is the so-called "Triumph of Chastity" in the

Rospigliosi Gallery in Rome. The nature of the subject is better expressed by the French title, "La Force qui frappe l'innocence." Venus, a lovely persecuted woman, with her frightened boy at her side, is seen flying before the furious attack of a severe-looking matron who has broken poor Cupid's bow and dashed the flaming torch from his hand. This picture is of especial interest, as being the only mythological subject which Lotto ever painted, with the single exception of Mr. Conway's "Danaë," a quaint little work of his early youth.

Late in 1526, Lotto returned to Venice, where he renewed his early friendship with Palma, and became intimate with Titian, who twenty years afterwards sent him cordial messages from Augsburg, and wished that he could have the benefit of his advice and experience at the court of Charles V. As Palma's influence marks the works which Lotto painted at Bergamo, so that of Titian is evident in the rich colouring of Lotto's ruined altar-piece of S. Nicholas in the Carmine, and in the "Woman taken in Adultery" of the Louvre. At this period of his life, when he was between forty-five and sixty years of age, the master's powers were at their height. In 1531, he painted the grandest and most dramatic of all his works, the Crucifixion, at Monte San Giusto, near Macerata, in the Marches, with good Bishop Niccolò Buonafede kneeling at the foot of the Cross, and twenty-three other life-sized figures. Eight years later, he completed the remarkable altar-piece at Cingoli, in which the Virgin is seated in a rose garden, where *putti* scatter rose-leaves over S. Dominic kneeling at her feet, and fifteen medallions, containing scenes from the life of Christ, hang on the boughs of the rose-tree growing up the wall. Each of these medallions is a little picture in itself, and the whole series is of especial interest, as showing Lotto's close acquaintance with the text of Scripture. Whether he was actually influenced by the Venetian reformers, Contarini and Sadoleto, we cannot tell, but it is a singular fact that in October 1540, he painted portraits of Martin Luther and his wife for one of his own nephews. A will which Lotto made in 1546, and a curious account-book which he kept during the last fifteen years of his life, tell us more about his old age than we know of him at any other part of his career. These records alike bear witness to the painter's gentle and serious nature, to his kindness of heart and deep religious convictions. At one page we read that he painted a picture for the widow of a poor artist on condition that "she should marry again quickly and avoid being talked about." Further on we find a record of the dismissal of an apprentice whom he had kept for a year or more "until he became a cross too burdensome to be borne." So Ercole was sent away by his master "in all friendliness," but with the firm resolve never under any circumstances to take another apprentice. An experiment which the lonely old man tried, in 1542, of living in the house of a friend at Treviso, also proved a failure, and at the end of three years he returned to Venice, "for divers reasons, but chiefly because I did not earn enough for my own support." All his life he seems to have been a generous and improvident man, working hard and giving largely, but caring little for gain and taking no thought for the future, and in these records of his old age he describes himself as being "advanced in years and of an anxious mind." His piety and unworldliness seem to have been well known in Venice, and in a letter of 1548, Pietro Aretino addresses him in the following terms: "O Lotto, good as goodness and virtuous as virtue itself!" and goes on to observe, not without a touch of irony, that it matters little if Lotto holds the second place in painting on earth, since he is sure of the first place among the Saints in heaven.

During his residence in Venice, he spent most of his time with the Dominicans of SS. Giovanni and Paolo, and after his return from Treviso, in 1546, he took up his abode in their convent once more, and made a will, leaving his possessions to their hospital, and desiring to be buried in the habit of the order. The fine altar-piece of S. Antonino, the saintly Bishop of Florence, in glory, with young deacons, carrying out his last wishes and distributing bread and wine to the needy poor, in the foreground, was finished a few years before for the church of the convent which he intended to be his last home. But in 1549, he went back to the Marches to paint an Assumption in a church at Ancona, and remained there engaged on other works during the next five years. Finally, on the 8th of September, 1554, "being tired of wandering and wishing to end his days in a holy place," he dedicated himself and all his worldly goods to the service of the Virgin, and became an inmate of the Santa Casa, of Loreto, only asking in return to be given rooms and clothing and the use of a servant, to be treated with the same consideration as a Canon, to be prayed for daily as a benefactor, and have one florin a month to spend as he pleased. Here he spent the last four years of his life, growing daily feebler but still painting pictures in the basilica and Palazzo Apostolico until his death in 1556. To the end he retained his great powers of expression, and in the figure of Simeon lifting his aged face to heaven as he utters the *Nunc Dimittis*, which appears in one of his last works, we have a touching picture of the old painter who had come to die in the Holy House. This "Presentation of Christ in the Temple" is described by Lotto's latest biographer as a remarkably fine and vigorous work, almost monochrome in tone, and "perhaps the most modern work ever painted by an old Italian master."

TITIAN

1477–1576

THE greatest and most illustrious of Giorgione's followers was Titian. Like all his brother-artists in Venice, the painter of Cadore caught the new spirit which that wonderful youth had breathed into art, and lived to carry the fire and poetry of his genius far into the next century. A native of one of the most picturesque valleys in the Dolomite Alps, Tiziano Vecelli was born at Pieve di Cadore, in 1447, and, at the age of ten, was sent to the house of an uncle in Venice, with his elder brother, to learn painting. He began as an apprentice in the shop of Sebastiano Zuccato, a painter and mosaic worker, but received his real training from Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. In the *atelier* of the last-named master he became acquainted with Giorgione, and followed his style so closely that his early works were hardly to be distinguished from those of his associate. In 1507, he was employed as Giorgione's assistant on the frescoes of the Fondaco and, after that artist's premature death, finished several of his pictures. One of Titian's earliest works is the Antwerp picture of Pope Alexander VI. presenting Jacopo di Pesaro, the warlike bishop of Paphos, better known by his nickname of Baffo, to S. Peter ; a group which must have been painted before the Pope's death in 1503, and which, like so many of the great Venetian's masterpieces, once belonged to our Charles I. If the influence of the Bellini is still paramount in this youthful composition, that of Giorgione is strongly marked in a long list of works which belong to the next ten or twelve years. We need only name the noble portraits of *L'homme au gant* in the Louvre, the so-called "Ariosto" at Cobham, which is probably the portrait of Barbaro mentioned by Vasari, the "Flora" of the Uffizi, and the half-length of an unknown personage at Hampton Court, the "Madonna of the Cherries" and "La Zingarella" at Vienna, the "Concert" of the Pitti, the exquisite idylls of the "Three Ages" at Bridgewater House, and of "Medea and Venus" in the Borghese Gallery. In these works and many others we recognise not only the glow and splendour of Giorgione's colouring, but the poetry of his conception, the radiant loveliness of his landscapes, above all the touch of romance that he lent alike to classical and sacred subjects, or to the *fantasie* of his own invention. The execution of Titian's works may be a little less refined, his women-faces may lack the pure and spiritual charm of Giorgione's

art, but none the less he comes nearer than any other artist of his day to that short-lived master whose influence on his age had been so wide and far-reaching.

After Giorgione's death, Titian's style underwent many changes and passed through a succession of phases, each of which reflects, in a remarkable way, the ideals and events of the age. As the art of Giovanni Bellini represents the thoughts and aspirations of the fifteenth century, so the later work of Titian expresses the passions and tendencies, the strength and weakness of the Venetian Renaissance in the days of Spanish influence. But throughout his long career we trace a gradual development of his mighty powers, a growing mastery of every portion of his art, a firmer grasp of realities, and a deeper and truer insight into life and character. The death of his aged master Giovanni Bellini, in 1516, left Titian without a rival in Venice. He carried on the works in the Sala del Consiglio, succeeded to the post of broker on the Fondaco which Bellini had held for so many years, and painted a grand series of altar-pieces for the principal churches of Venice. His great "Assumption" was placed over the high altar of the Frari, on the Feast of San Bernardino, in 1518. The glorious "Madonna di Pesaro," that typical Venetian altar-piece, was finished in 1526, to commemorate the naval victory of the same Admiral-Bishop, Jacopo, whom he had painted when he was about to start on his first campaign against the Turks, three-and-twenty years before. The "Death of S. Pietro Martire," which perished in the disastrous fire of 1867, and which is said, more than any other of his works, to have displayed the artist's marvellous dramatic powers, was painted in 1528, for the friars of SS. Giovanni and Paolo, while the large "Presentation of the Virgin" was not finished until twelve years later. Here Titian borrowed a motive which Jacopo Bellini had drawn in his sketch-book, more than a hundred years before, and employed all the resources of his art to glorify the theme. The little blue-robed maiden who walks quietly up the steps of the Temple is surrounded by a crowd of grey-headed Venetian senators and richly clad ladies, while the windows are thronged with people of every rank and age, and beyond marble palaces and porticoes we look out on the mountains of Cadore and the steep crag of Marmorolo in the distance.

Chief among Titian's early patrons were the Dukes of Mantua and Ferrara. For Federigo Gonzaga he painted the "Entombment," the "Supper at Emmaus," and the "Madonna del Coniglio." These works, once the glory of Charles the First's collection, are now in the Louvre, while the famous series of the Twelve Cæsars, which came to England with the bulk of the Mantua pictures, afterwards perished in a fire in the Alcazar, at Madrid. For Alfonso d'Este's studio, at Ferrara, Titian executed the sublime "Christ of the Tribute-Money," a picture still in his Giorgionesque style, and the classical allegories which include the wonderful "Bacchus and Ariadne" of the National Gallery (1523), and the scarcely less beautiful "Worship of Venus" at Madrid. The sight of Titian's portrait of the Duke of Ferrara is said to have inspired Charles V. with the wish to be painted by the Venetian master, whose firm friend and constant patron he remained during more than twenty years. Three portraits of the Emperor by Titian's hand are still in existence. The first, a full-length figure of the Emperor with his white dog at his side, was painted at Bologna, in 1533, while two later works were executed during the painter's visit to Augsburg, in 1548. In the equestrian portrait at Madrid, Charles V. is seen clad in armour,

mounted on the black war-horse which he rode at Mühlberg, and a gleam of sun breaking through the rolling clouds, on the banks of the Elbe, lights up the great Kaiser's pale face as he goes on his way to battle. In the other, at Munich, he sits alone in his armchair by the window, and seems to muse on the vanity of greatness and the weariness of the burden he is soon to lay down. Two years afterwards the painter, then seventy-three years old, crossed the Alps once more at the Emperor's bidding, in the dead of winter, and returned loaded with honours and rewards, in the words of his smooth-tongued friend, Aretino, "no longer poor as a painter but rich as a prince." This time he painted the full-length portrait of the Emperor's son and successor, Philip II. of Spain, in armour, which is now at Madrid. For the same monarch many of his later works were executed, amongst others, the beautiful "Antiope," or "Venus del Pardo," of the Louvre, with the exquisite landscape background that was to serve as a model for future artists during the next two hundred years.

Another august patron who would gladly have retained Titian in his service was Pope Paul III., at whose invitation he visited Rome, in 1545, and painted the wonderful portrait of the old pontiff and his nephews, the Farnese Cardinals, which is now in the Museum at Naples. On this occasion the great master studied the wonders of antique and modern art in the Vatican with the closest attention, and often said afterwards that he had learnt much which had been of the utmost use and value to him, and only wished that he had visited Rome twenty years before. He exchanged visits with Michelangelo, and saw the Stanze with Sebastiano del Piombo, who had to confess that he was the "barbarian who had dared to restore Raphael's frescoes." But he declined to accept the seals of the Piombo which the Pope offered him after Sebastiano's death, and preferred to join the Emperor at Augsburg.

Many were the portraits of other distinguished personages which Titian painted during these journeys, or after his return to Venice. As Vasari remarked when he visited the aged master in 1566, he had painted every prince and lord and lady of note then living. His portraits of his imperial patron's rival, King Francis I., of the great Captain d'Avalos, and of the Doge Andrea Gritti, are familiar to us all. So, too, is the splendid picture of the Duke of Urbino in armour which hangs in the Pitti, and that of his wife, Eleonora Gonzaga, whom he painted in many different forms, who was the model for the Venus of the Uffizi and the "Maiden in the Fur Cloak," at Vienna, and whose dark eyes and lovely features he immortalised in the Bella of the Pitti. There is the Duchess of Urbino's mother, Isabella d'Este, with her royal air and sumptuous costume, at Vienna, and the bright-haired child, Roberta Strozzi, at Berlin, and the sad-eyed Empress Isabel, whose portrait her imperial husband took with him to the cloisters of San Yuste, and kept before him as he lay dying. There is Charles V.'s fiery enemy, the Elector John Frederick of Saxony, whom Titian painted as a captive at Augsburg, and the Emperor's brother, King Ferdinand, whose portrait is still preserved at Verona; and there is his own doctor Parma, at Vienna, and his friend Aretino, that strange being whom he introduces as Pilate in his "Ecce Homo"—Aretino, the scourge and parasite of princes, the adviser whom the painter found so indispensable, who whispered his praises in royal ears and was ever urging him to ask for new offices and favours, but who, for all his low cunning and treacherous ways, had at least the merit of appreciating Titian's rare genius to the full. And there are the master's own pictures of

himself, which are as finely painted and as subtle in delineation of character as any of his portraits. The full-faced bust, with the black skull-cap and fur-trimmed pelisse, and the gold chain of his order of knighthood round his neck, which came with the Solly collection to Berlin, is the most familiar; but the noble profile at Madrid, with the wan face and spare white locks, gives us a graver and more impressive idea of the great painter in his last days, when bodily strength was beginning to fail, but the fire within burnt with an ever clearer and purer lustre. Nor must we forget the winning portraits of his own daughter, that beloved Lavinia, whom he held "dearer and more precious than all else in the world." Often he painted her under different forms and names, as a reclining Venus after Giorgione's pattern, or as the "Daughter of Herodias," carrying the Baptist's head on a salver, or again as a fair young girl among the crowd in his large "Ecce Homo" at Vienna. Often too, he represented her with the pearls twisted in her yellow hair, and the bright smile on her coral lips, as we see her in the charming portraits at Berlin (1549) and Dresden (1555), and again, after her marriage, in the riper beauty of matronly years. And when death had snatched her from his side in the flower of her age, he painted that touching picture only known to us by Van Dyke's print, in which the aged master is seen at his handsome daughter's side, and the skull at her side reminds us of the sudden death which had closed her happy life.

About 1520, Titian had married a Venetian wife named Cecilia, who died in 1530, when his sons and daughter were still young children, and the painter's grief at this crushing blow is touchingly described by the Duke of Mantua's agent, who writes that the master is overwhelmed with grief, and has been quite unable to work at the pictures which he is painting for his Excellency. At Titian's request, his sister Orsola came from Cadore to tend his motherless children, and remained until her death, the "mother, companion and steward of his household." Soon after his wife's death, the painter left his old house in the Campo S. Samuele, near the Rialto, and moved to a new and spacious house in the Biri Grande, with a large garden leading over the lagoon, and commanding views of the blue Ceneda hills and the crag of Antelao in his native Cadore. Here, in later days, Aretino and Sansovino were daily guests, and the most illustrious personages in Venice came to spend the summer evenings and sup in the gardens, listening to the strains of music and song that filled the air, and watching the gondolas and boats on the lagoon. Here King Henry III. of France came in the summer of 1574, to see the great painter, who was then ninety-seven years of age, but still active and vigorous; and here the Cardinals, Pacheco and Granvelle, arrived one evening and invited themselves to dinner, upon which the painter flung his purse to a servant and bade him kill the fatted calf, as "all the world was dining with him." And here young Giorgio Vasari came in 1566, and found the old master with the brushes still in his hand, painting immortal pictures. That breadth and freedom of brushwork which Vasari noticed on this occasion is apparent in all Titian's later creations. And he remarks justly that instead of being as some men imagine, flung off in careless haste, these rapid strokes were the result of incessant labour and lifelong experience. The magic of Titian's colouring and the sublime power of his thought are nowhere more fully displayed than in such paintings as the Wisdom on the ceiling of the Library in the Palazzo Reale, or the Madonna and Child formerly in the Dudley collection, now the property of M. Ludwig Mond, which must have been painted when he was past ninety. There is

a depth of feeling and devotion in many of these later religious pictures that is unknown in the graceful Madonnas and Saints of his early days. We need only recall such noble conceptions as the "Doge Grimani's Vision" in the Ducal Palace, the "Baptist in the Desert" in the Academy of Venice, or the solemn "Christ Crowned with Thorns," at Munich, which Tintoretto begged the painter to give him, and hung up in his own *atelier* as a model for other artists.

But the peace and prosperity of the great master's closing years were saddened by the loss of his beloved Lavinia, and the extravagance and ill-conduct of his elder son Pomponio. Titian himself was fond of luxurious surroundings and gay company, and was noted for his polished manners; but he had the true commercial instinct of his race, and was a shrewd hand at making bargains. The innumerable letters which he addressed to his patrons from Venice are written in Aretino's servile and cringing tone, and he urges his requests for a pension for himself, or a canonry for his son, with the most unwearied pertinacity. Unfortunately, the promises of his imperial and royal patrons were often badly kept, the large pension which Charles V. settled upon him was but irregularly paid, and his son, Philip II., was still more dilatory in rewarding his labours. In a letter which Titian addressed to his Catholic Majesty, in February 1576, only six months before his death, he complains that for the last seventy years he has sent picture after picture to Spain without ever receiving a recompense of any kind, and piteously entreats him of his royal benevolence to relieve his wants. In his last days, the wonderful old man worked at a Pietà, which he had begun three years before, for the Franciscans of the Frari, a picture which, although finished by Palma Giovine, reveals the elevation of his thought and the incomparable power of his hand in the most remarkable manner. But the plague, which had been raging in the lagoons for several months, suddenly attacked the aged master, and, on the 27th of August, the greatest of Venetian painters breathed his last, at the age of ninety-nine. In spite of the panic-stricken state of the city, Titian was buried with due honour. The canons of S. Mark came in solemn procession to his house, and buried him in S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, where a stately monument marks his last resting-place, close to his great picture of the "Madonna di Ca' Pesaro."

His countrymen called him *il divino* in his lifetime, and the tribute of successive ages has confirmed the truth of their verdict. As Mr. Ruskin once wrote: "There is a strange under-current of everlasting murmur about his name which means the deep consent of all great men that he is greater than they."

JACOPO TINTORETTO

1518–1594

WHEN decadence had already settled on the rest of Italy, the sacred fire was kept alive in Venice by a succession of great masters, who prolonged the existence of art to the close of the sixteenth century. Chief among these last Venetian painters of the golden age was Jacopo Robusti, commonly known as "Il Tintoretto"—the little dyer—from his father's trade. The son of a poor working man, living in the heart of the lagoons, Tintoretto was born in September, 1518, and seems to have been in a great measure self-taught. The story that Ridolfi tells of his short apprenticeship in Titian's workshop, and of his dismissal by the great master in a fit of jealous anger, is not supported by any evidence, and his early style would rather lead us to suppose that Bonifazio Veronese had been his first teacher. At an early age he set up a studio of his own, and boldly proclaimed his ambition to combine the colouring of Titian with the drawing of Michelangelo. But although he studied the works of his great fellow-citizen and copied casts of the mighty Tuscan's statues with characteristic energy, he was, from the first, far more intent on rendering effects of light and atmosphere than on acquiring excellence of drawing or colouring. Both in this respect, and in his curious treatment of biblical subjects Tintoretto strongly resembles Rembrandt. He represents the Crucifixion or the Last Supper as if the sacred event had taken place under his own eyes, and surrounds the great story with the commonest incidents and most familiar sights and scenes of every-day life. Yet his imaginative power was of the highest order, and he employed his mastery of light and shadow to give his gigantic figures a sublime and mysterious poetry which renders his creations altogether unique.

Unfortunately, Tintoretto's execution is very unequal, and there is considerable truth in the Venetian saying that he had three different pencils; one of gold, another of silver, and a third of iron. He worked with the most extraordinary rapidity, and Sebastiano del Piombo used to say that Tintoretto covered more canvas in two days than he did in two years. The result of this haste in the preparation of his pictures and of his habit of painting on a dark ground is that in many instances the colour has turned black and the beauty of the work has been utterly destroyed. For

many years the dyer's son remained poor and unknown, and in his ardour for work the young artist often accepted commissions without payment. He decorated a row of houses inhabited by workmen at the Arsenal with a fresco of Belshazzar's Feast, and painted several other subjects on the exterior of buildings, for which he received little or no remuneration. In his dealings with his patrons his conduct offers a curious contrast to that of Titian, and many stories are told of his generous and improvident habits, which greatly distressed his more prudent wife. Ridolfi tells us how she gave him a certain sum of money when he went out and how, when she asked him to account for it on his return, the only answer she could obtain was that it had been all given away.

Tintoretto's first pictures were mostly painted for Venetian churches. Chief among them are four large subjects in S. Maria dell' Orto, which he began in 1546. In one of these, the "Presentation of the Virgin," he ventured to enter the lists with Titian, but the manner in which he treats the subject reveals his originality of invention. Groups of beggars and spectators are seen on the broad flight of steps leading to the Temple courts, and the little white-veiled child, standing on the topmost stair against the blue sky, has a singularly touching and poetic effect. Two years later he painted the "Miracle of S. Mark" in the Academy, which has always been considered one of his finest works, and in which the action of the Saint, descending from heaven to rescue a Christian slave, is represented with all the vehement energy of his genius. The "Adam and Eve" and "Death of Abel," also in the Academy, with their finely modelled figures and striking but sadly blackened landscapes, belong to another series which originally adorned the Scuola of the Trinità, while the well-known "Marriage of Cana," painted in 1561, hangs in the sacristy of the Madonna della Salute, and S. Giorgio Maggiore contains an impressive "Last Supper" and the beautiful picture of the Israelites gathering manna, on the banks of a running stream.

The genius of the painter now began to attract public attention. In 1545, he was employed to decorate a ceiling in the house of Titian's friend Pietro Aretino, who early recognised the young artist's talent, and addressed him affectionately as "*mio figliuolo*" in a letter full of excellent advice which he wrote, congratulating him on the success of his "Miracle of S. Mark," in 1548. During the next twelve years, the painter was probably engaged upon some of the numerous works which now adorn the different galleries of Europe. Both the Pitti and Uffizi, as well as the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, contain a number of these magnificent portraits in which Tintoretto has represented the Senators, Procurators and Admirals of his day in all the splendour of their state robes and venerable old age. The National Gallery has one fine specimen of his work in a "S. George and the Dragon," conceived and executed in that fiery style that won for him the name of "*il Furioso*," while Hampton Court is fortunate in possessing two excellent examples of his middle period, the "Esther before Ahasuerus" and the beautiful picture of the "Nine Muses," one of the few works which bears the painter's signature, "Jacomo Tentoreto en Venetia." Another still nobler work, the great "Christ washing the feet of his disciples," which like the "Muses," once adorned the gallery of Charles I., is now in the Palace of the Escurial, while the Prado contains no less than six sacred subjects and one of the painter's most famous battle-pieces. But it is only in

Venice itself that Tintoretto's genius can be fully appreciated, in the two great series of works, with which he decorated the Scuola di S. Rocco and the Ducal Palace. The year 1560 was a memorable one in the painter's life. For it was then that he began to work both at S. Rocco and in the halls of the Doge's Palace, and that his beloved daughter Marietta was born. A year or two before, the dyer's son, whose position in Venice was now assured, had married Faustina, the daughter of a senator named Marco de' Vescovi, and settled in the carved white Gothic house, which is still shown as Tintoretto's home, on the Fondamenta de' Mori. Like Titian's house in Biri Grande, it looks across the lagoons of Murano to the distant hills, and that long line of Alps, which catches the rosied hues of morning and evening, and changes with every aspect of the day. Here Tintoretto led a busy, secluded life, working with unremitting ardour, and here his eldest child was born, the girl Marietta, who grew up to be the light of her father's eyes and became an accomplished portrait-painter herself. She married a jeweller named Mario, and was in great request in Venetian society for her talents in playing and singing, as well as painting, but died at the age of thirty to the bitter grief of her father. Her eldest brother Domenico was also a painter of some note, who helped his father in the colossal undertakings which were crowded into the last thirty years of his life.

In 1560, the members of the Scuola di S. Rocco, the wealthiest and most august of Venetian confraternities, invited the chief painters in the city to compete for the decoration of their splendid new Scuola, lately built by the Lombardi. Tintoretto began by painting the ceiling of the Sala dell' Albergo at his own expense, "as a gift to S. Rocco," and five years later, executed the great "Crucifixion," for which he received 250 ducats. In 1567, he was employed to paint two altar-pieces in the adjoining church, and after a pause of nine years, during which he was engaged in decorating the Ducal Palace, he offered to adorn the whole of the Scuola, and to supply three pictures yearly on the Feast of S. Rocco, for a salary of 100 ducats. He kept his word, and by the time of his death, the whole of the sixty-two paintings, which cover the walls and ceiling of the upper and lower halls, and staircase, were completed. Every variety of the master's style is to be seen in this Scuola di San Rocco, which is a perfect gallery of his art. Some of the subjects are dashed off with excessive haste, others, such as the "Adoration of the Magi" in the lower hall, and the "Visitation" on the staircase, are admirable examples of his rich and sombre colour, and fine feeling, while the great "Crucifixion" and the pathetic scene of the white-robed "Christ before Pilate," are painted with a mysterious grandeur and poetry, which Tintoretto himself has never surpassed. And the whole series, ruined as it is by time and neglect, remains a monumental example of the vast results which the imagination and industry, the genius and perseverance of a single man can accomplish.

The works which Tintoretto painted in the Ducal Palace at the same period are only second to those in S. Rocco in amount and interest. When Titian found himself compelled, in 1555, to give up painting the Doges' portraits, Tintoretto was appointed to do the work in his stead and, five years later, was summoned to paint the picture of the new Doge, Girolamo Priuli. In 1561, he was employed to decorate the ceiling of the Libreria Nuova with figures of Diogenes and other philosophers, and during the following year he executed

several large historical pieces in the different halls of the Ducal Palace, all of which perished in the fires of 1574 and 1577. The most important of these lost works was his picture of the victory of Lepanto which, originally entrusted to Titian, was finally allotted to Tintoretto, who addressed an earnest appeal to the senate, begging to be allowed to execute the work at cost price. In 1574, when the picture was finished, Tintoretto received a promise of the reversion of the broker's patent on the Fondaco, and in due course succeeded to the lucrative and honourable post which had been held by Giovanni Bellini and Titian in succession. After the great fire of 1577, he and Veronese were the chief artists employed to decorate the new halls, and the superb series of paintings which adorn the walls and ceilings of the different rooms was executed by Tintoretto during the next twelve years. Most of these are ceremonial compositions in which the Doges figure largely, and the palaces and churches of the lagoons are seen in the background, glorified with all the magic of light and atmosphere that Tintoretto understood so well. But the gem of the whole series is the richly coloured "Bacchus and Ariadne," which with three other mythological subjects of rare charm were painted, in 1578, on the ceiling of the small Sala dell' Anti-Collegio. This admirable composition has fortunately hitherto escaped restoration, and is of priceless value as an example of Tintoretto's lovely form and brilliant colour in the purity of its original condition. Finally, in the year 1588, when the painter was seventy years old, he began the colossal "Paradise" which covers the whole of the wall at one end of the Sala del Consiglio. This picture is said to be the largest oil-painting in the world, measuring as it does eighty-four feet in length and thirty-four in height, and containing upwards of five hundred figures. The whole of this immense and blackened surface is lighted by the glory that radiates from the central form of Christ. At his side kneels Mary Mother, with outstretched arms, pointing to the crowds of men and women below. Archangels and angels fly across the picture, apostles and evangelists, saints and fathers of the Church, patriarchs and prophets, are ranged in circles on their separate thrones. Below are the great multitude which no man can number. Many of the faces are of rare beauty. Here and there, among the crowd, we distinguish some familiar form—the angel of the Annunciation, with his lily, flying towards the Virgin, David with his psaltery, and close behind S. Augustine his mother Monica, "watching him, her chief joy in Paradise." Mary Magdalen is there, and S. Agnes, whom Tintoretto loved to paint, with her snow-white lamb, and Abraham embracing Isaac, and Rachel among her children. Those favourite virgin-saints of Venetian art, S. Giustina of Padua, and S. Barbara with her tower, are there too; and, in the right-hand corner, we see Adam and Eve driven by the angel with the flaming sword out of their earthly Paradise. And in the centre of this vast mass of circling figures the Angel of the sea rises swiftly at the feet of Christ to intercede for Venice and her children.

The stupendous work was finished in 1590, and Ridolfi describes the wonder and admiration which it excited in the following words: "When this grand conception was unveiled, every one thought that a vision of heavenly bliss had indeed been revealed to mortal eyes, and the painter was praised on every side. He had prayed the Lord to give him the painting of the picture in this life, that he might the more surely enter Paradise after death," and now he rested from his work altogether, and spent much of his time, we are told, walking in the gardens of S. Maria

dell' Orto, conversing on religious subjects with the friars of the convent. That same year his daughter Marietta died, and was buried in the vault of the Vescovi, in the choir of this same church which Tintoretto had adorned with some of his earliest works. The death of his dearly loved child was a shock from which the aged master never recovered. He lived four years more, but suffered from an internal disease, and a short attack of fever carried him off on the 31st of May, 1594. An entry in the registers of the church of San Marcilian, thus records his death :

> "31 May, 1594. Died Messer Jacomo Robusti, called Tintoretto, aged 75 years, 8 months, having been sick of fever fourteen days."

PAOLO VERONESE

1528–1588

PAOLO VERONESE, as the name implies, was born at Verona in 1528, and may be regarded as the final outcome of the successive generations of painters who had made the school of Verona famous during the last hundred years. He sprang from a race of artists, and was apprenticed at fourteen to his uncle, Antonio Badile, but owed more to a better painter, Domenico del Riccio, surnamed Brusasorci—the Rat-burner—who had a marked influence on his early style. In 1551, he accompanied that master to Mantua, where the two artists employed by Cardinal Gonzaga were to execute several works in the Duomo, and afterwards decorated some villas in the Trevisana with frescoes. In 1555, Paolo, who by this time was already a master of some reputation, received an invitation to decorate a church in Venice, from the Prior of the convent of S. Sebastiano, who was himself a native of Verona. Thus, at twenty-seven years of age, the young painter came to Venice, among whose artists he was to be henceforth numbered, and where he was to reproduce the brilliant and richly coloured life of her citizens with a truth and vividness seldom equalled by any of her own children. The sight of Titian's masterpieces, the effect produced upon him by the splendours of Venetian architecture and painting, stimulated him to put forth his full powers, and the series of the works with which he adorned the church of S. Sebastiano soon attracted public attention. Before long he became the most popular artist of the day, and at Titian's recommendation was employed in 1561, to work in the Ducal Palace, where he painted a large historical composition of Barbarossa, and other subjects which perished in the conflagration of the Great Hall. At the same time, he began to paint those immense pictures of banquets which have made his name famous. "The Marriage at Cana" in the Louvre, was painted in 1563, for the refectory of S. Giorgio Maggiore, the "Supper of Christ in the House of Levi," was finished in April 1572, for the Dominicans of SS. Giovanni and Paolo, and the "Feast of S. Gregory," at the convent of Monte Berico, near Vicenza, towards the end of the same year. These great compositions, in spite of their sacred titles, were, in reality, merely reproductions of those sumptuous banquets and festive entertainments in which the wealthy Venetians took delight and which in the days of the Spanish influence were marked by an ever-increasing degree of state and

ceremonial. The presence of Christ and his disciples are but insignificant accessories in the scene. The stately Palladian architecture and gorgeous costumes, the crowd of musicians and dwarfs and lackeys, the gold and silver plate, the silken canopies and banners are all borrowed from Venetian life. And over this scene of mundane pomp and splendour, in which the pride of life and the lust of the eyes find their full gratification, the painter pours the glory of the noonday sun and the radiant clearness of the summer heavens. He lets in the blue skies and the white clouds through his marble colonnades, and by the magic of his colour and atmosphere, succeeds in giving a touch of poetry to these prosaic splendours. It is a curious sign of the times that Paolo's chief patrons were priors and monks, and that these representations of worldly magnificence were almost invariably executed for convent refectories. On one occasion indeed, the Holy Office interfered, and the artist was summoned before the tribunal of the Inquisition, to explain the liberties that he had taken with the Gospel text, in the picture of the "Supper at the House of Simon" which he had painted for the Dominicans of SS. Giovanni and Paolo. He was especially taken to task for leaving out the figure of the Magdalen and for introducing buffoons, dwarfs and German halberdiers, in the same picture as Christ and his Apostles, and after undergoing a rigorous examination, was desired to substitute a figure of the Magdalen for the brown dog sitting upon the floor, watching the cat hidden under the table-cloth. Paolo defended himself by saying that he thought painters were privileged to use the same licence as poets and jesters and quoted the example of Michelangelo, who had painted a crowd of undraped figures with little reverence, in his fresco of the "Last Judgment," in the Papal Chapel. He was finally ordered to correct the picture at his own expense within the next three months, but all he seems to have done was to add an inscription, altering the title of the picture, and calling it the "Supper in the House of Levi," by which expedient the omission of the Magdalen was justified. The frankness and candour of Paolo's answers on this occasion evidently helped to disarm the severity of his judges and make us realise the simplicity and honesty that marked the painter's whole nature.

In 1566, Paolo paid a short visit to his native city, where he painted the fine Martyrdom of S. George in the church of that name, and married his cousin, Elena, the daughter of his uncle and first master, Badile. The portraits of himself and his wife and a charming group of his three children caressing their pet dogs are introduced in the foreground of the "Supper at Emmaus," which he painted some years later, and which afterwards became the property of Louis XIV., and is now in the Louvre. In the spring of the same year, Paolo painted the frescoes of mythological and allegorical objects which adorn the Villa Barbaro, at Maser, near Treviso, and give us a high idea of his decorative powers. In this work he was largely helped by his able assistant Zelotti, while many of the large compositions that bear his name, are, in reality, the work of inferior artists, who were employed in his vast shop to execute the immense number of commissions which his great popularity brought him. Both his sons became painters of some note, but Carlo, the younger and by far the most gifted of the two, died a few years after his father, at the early age of twenty-six. Among the finest works that were painted by his own hand, we may recall the "Marriage of S. Katharine," in Santa Caterina, Venice, and the noble picture of S. Sebastian, exhorting his fellow-sufferers, Marcus and Marcilian, on their way to execution, a spirited and dramatic composition

which still adorns the church of S. Sebastiano. The Dresden Gallery contains several excellent works by the master, including the fine "Madonna" of the Cuccina family, and a smaller replica of the "Marriage at Cana," while our national collection has one magnificent picture, the "Family of Darius in the presence of Alexander," which is in reality nothing but a group of portraits of the different members of the Pisani family, arranged so as to form a grand historic *tableau.*

After the fire of 1577, Paolo and his assistants were employed to decorate the new halls of the Ducal Palace, and two of his finest works may be seen in the Sala del Collegio, where foreign ambassadors were received by the Doge, and in the adjoining ante-chamber. One is the grand votive picture painted to commemorate the victory of Lepanto in which the heroic Doge, Sebastiano Venier, and Agostino Barbarigo who lost his life on that hardly fought day, are introduced at the feet of Christ in Glory, and the Venetian fleet is seen in the distance. The other is the "Rape of Europa," the most graceful and poetic of all the painter's creations. A troop of joyous maidens wreathe garlands of roses about the snow-white bull who bears their fair companion to the enchanted shore and through the bright foliage of arching boughs we look out on a sunny stretch of blue waves and summer skies.

The painter was preparing designs for the Paradise of the Council hall, when he caught a chill, while taking part in a procession on Easter Monday, and died of fever on the 19th of April, 1588, in his sixtieth year. He was buried by the monks of S. Sebastiano in the church which he had decorated with so many of his works and a bust was placed upon his tomb bearing the following proud inscription:

"Paulo Caliario, Veronen pictori, naturæ
æmul, artis miraculo, superstite fatis,
fama victuro."

Paolo Veronese appeals to artists not only by his marvellous facility and remarkable powers of composition, but by the excellence and thoroughness of his workmanship. And the curiously modern character of his technique, the breadth and freedom of his brushwork, render him especially attractive in the eyes of the present generation. Both he and Tintoretto helped to form the style of the famous master who was born in Spain a few years after the death of these last great Venetians, and through their works, the dying art of the Italian Renaissance gave an impulse to the school of Velasquez, which in its turn was to exercise so marked an influence on the development of modern painting.

Historical Notices

PLATE

The Madonna del Gran Duca

RAPHAEL

The Madonna del Gran Duca

By Raphael

The "Madonna del Gran Duca" is one of the earliest and most perfect of Raphael's Virgins. It may have been painted for Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, or for his sister, the widowed Prefetessa, but was no doubt executed soon after the young master's arrival in Florence, in October 1504. The type of the Madonna's face recalls a drawing ascribed to Timoteo Viti in the British Museum, but Raphael's own sketch for the picture is in the Uffizi.

The great charm of the group lies in its perfect simplicity. The blue-green mantle falls in graceful folds over the Virgin's red robe, and a transparent veil lies on her fair hair. An expression of serene content rests on her gentle face, and the Child clings with joyous confidence to His mother's arms. The composition possesses in a supreme degree that sense of rhythm and balance which marks the highest art and belongs to that happy moment when all that was purest and holiest in the old school and all that was most lovely in the new, met in the work of the youthful master of Urbino.

A strange fate befell this beautiful picture. Towards the close of the last century it became the property of a poor widow, who sold it for sixty crowns to a Florentine bookseller. In 1799, it was bought by Puccini, the director of the Grand Duke of Tuscany's galleries, for 571 crowns, after which Ferdinand III. would never part from it again, but took it with him on all his travels. From that time the picture became known as "The Madonna del Gran Duca," and in 1859 was placed in the Pitti Gallery.

Size: 33 *inches high, by* 22 *inches wide.*

[*See* FRONTISPIECE

PLATE

The Madonna and Child with Angels

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

The Madonna and Child with Angels

By Fra Filippo Lippi

This picture was originally painted by the Carmelite friar for Cosimo de' Medici's palace in the Via Larga, and probably hung over the altar in the chapel afterwards decorated with Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes.

The Virgin is seated in a chair at an open window, and clasps her hands together in silent adoration, while the Child is held up before her by two boy angels. Her robe is dark green. A chain of graduated beads adorns her brow, and a quaint head-dress of elaborately frilled muslin falls in dainty folds on her neck. One curly-headed boy, in a white tunic with purple wings, looks round with a mischievous glance in his laughing eyes. The other stands outside the window, and his face is partly hidden by the arms of the chubby-faced Babe who holds out his hands to His mother. In the background is a wide and beautiful landscape. On the right, rocky heights and the towers and spires of a far-off city, steeped in the warm glow of the evening sun; on the left, a red-roofed chapel and a cypress grove in the foreground, and beyond, a winding river, flowing through wooded banks and cultivated meadows to lose itself in the sea. The colouring, as in all Fra Filippo's pictures, is rich and harmonious, and Masaccio's influence is evident in the modelling of the Virgin's head and hands, and in the graceful lines of the drapery.

This picture is now in the Uffizi, where a fine drawing of the subject, by the painter's own hand, on tinted paper, heightened with white, may be also seen.

Size: 35 *inches high, by* 24 *inches wide.*

Madonna and Child with Angels

Lippi

PLATE

The Madonna writing the Magnificat, with the Child and Angels

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

The Madonna writing the Magnificat, with the Child and Angels

By Sandro Botticelli

The exact date of this picture is uncertain, but the beauty of the workmanship and the freedom with which the theme is handled point to the mature period of the artist's career, probably about the year 1490. *All Sandro's deepest poetry, all the passionate fervour and originality of his nature, all his simple and naïve grace are present in this masterpiece of early Florentine art. The Virgin, clad in a gold-embroidered mantle, with a coloured handkerchief on her head, and a transparent veil flowing over her golden tresses, is in the act of dipping her pen into the ink, to write the words of the Magnificat in the pages of a book that is held open before her. The Child on her knee holds a ripe pomegranate in one hand and looks up in his mother's face with a flash of sudden inspiration. Two boy-angels hold a crown above the Virgin's head, while two others hold the book and inkstand ready for her use; and between the bowed heads we catch a lovely glimpse of blue hills and winding river bathed in soft sunshine. The colour is rich and glowing, and the lights are heightened with gold. The orange tunic of the dark-haired, pale-faced boy, next to the child Christ, contrasts finely with the sober tints of His eager-eyed companion's dress, and golden rays stream down from heaven upon Mary's rippling locks and dark green mantle. But the most noteworthy thing in the picture is the expression of the Virgin's face. At the very moment when she realises all the fulness of her glory, when angels place the crown upon her brow and the Child guides her hand to write the words that proclaim her blessed among women, the sword pierces her heart with a mysterious foretaste of coming agony. In this mystic union of joy and pain, of sharpest anguish and highest bliss, we recognise one of the great principles of Catholic theology which had found a living type in the most popular of mediæval saints, Francis of Assisi. This is the idea which the painter who loved Dante and believed in Savonarola to his dying day, has tried to express in this sad-eyed Madonna, crowned by angel-hands. And, in spite of the limitations of his art, he has succeeded in reaching an ideal of divine sorrow and tenderness to which few painters have ever attained.*

Diameter: 3 *feet* 7 *inches.*

Madonna and Child with Angels

Botticelli

PLATE

The Madonna with the Child, S. Anne and S. John the Baptist

LEONARDO DA VINCI

The Madonna with the Child, S. Anne, and S. John the Baptist

By Leonardo da Vinci

In this cartoon we have the first sketch of a Holy Family, which Leonardo afterwards repeated in various forms. It is drawn in black chalk on white paper, and the feet and hands of S. Anne, and the stones in the foreground are quite unfinished; but the forms are admirably modelled and reveal the full perfection of the master's art.

The Child, in His mother's arms, is in the act of springing forward to reach S. John, while S. Anne, on whose lap the Virgin rests, turns to her daughter with a happy smile and points upwards, as if to show that she too is aware of the divine birth of Mary's Son. Both the children are full of innocent charm, but no words can express the surpassing loveliness of the Madonna's face. Nowhere else is the strange, sweet smile that haunts Leonardo's women so absolutely free from all suspicion of earthly guile, so tender and beautiful as it is here.

The history of this famous cartoon still remains wrapt in obscurity. It was probably designed at Milan, in the last years of the fifteenth century, for the French King, Louis XII., for whom Leonardo had already painted the "Vierge aux Rochers," but must have been brought back to Italy after the master's death, since Luini reproduced the group in a picture now in the Ambrosian Library, and it is mentioned by Lomazzo, in 1585, as being in the possession of the artist's son, Aurelio Luini. After remaining at Milan for more than a hundred years, in the possession of the Arconati family, Leonardo's cartoon was bought by the Marchese Casnedi, in 1720, and taken to Venice by the Procuratore Sagredo. Here it was sold, with the "Heads of the Twelve Apostles," formerly ascribed to Leonardo, and now at Weimar, to John Udny, the English consul at Venice, and taken by him to England about the year 1760. We find no mention of Leonardo's cartoon in the early records of the Royal Academy, but it was probably included in the collection of anatomical figures and studies that were taken over in 1767 from the old Academy, or Incorporated Society of Arts, in S. Martin's Lane.

On the 22nd of March, 1791, the following minute appears on the roll of the Council, signed by the President, Sir Joshua Reynolds:

> *"The Cartoon, by Leonardo da Vinci, in the Royal Academy, being in a perishable state, having been neglected many years: Resolved—That it have all the possible repairs and be secured in a Frame and Glasses, which the Secretary is requested to take charge of."*

The framed cartoon now hangs in the Diploma Gallery and has been twice exhibited of late years, at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1879, and at Burlington House in the winter of 1896. It is reproduced here by the special permission of the President and Council of the Royal Academy.

Size: 55 inches high, by 40 inches wide.

The Academy Cartoon

Leonardo da Vinci

PLATE

The Holy Family

FRA BARTOLOMMEO

The Holy Family

By Fra Bartolommeo

This Holy Family was painted by Fra Bartolommeo about the year 1509, *soon after the "Madonna and Saints," in the Duomo of Lucca, at a moment when he stood, as it were, half-way between Raphael and Leonardo. The picture of this happy group, resting under the palm and pomegranate trees, recalls the "Cardellino" and the "Belle Jardinière," both in its composition and lovely landscape background, while the delicate colouring and chiaroscuro come very near to Leonardo.*

The work is mentioned in the account-books of S. Marco, and after the dissolution of Fra Bartolommeo's partnership with Mariotto Albertinelli, was bought by Filippo di Averardo Salviati, a devoted follower of Savonarola and intimate friend of the artist, who also owned Fra Bartolommeo's portrait of Fra Girolamo, now in S. Marco. It remained in his descendants' possession for many years and was eventually bought by Lord Cowper, when he was Minister at Florence, at the end of the last century, and is now at Panshanger. The picture is painted on wood, and the panel bears the following inscription:

"D. Fra Bartolo di S. Marco, oggi defto. Antonio Salviati."

Size: 4 *m.* 3 *cent. high by* 3 *m.* 5 *cent. wide.*

The Holy Family

Fra Bartolommeo

PLATE

The Madonna delle Arpie

ANDREA DEL SARTO

The Madonna delle Arpie

By Andrea del Sarto

This picture, which now adorns the Tribune of the Uffizi, was painted by Andrea del Sarto—according to Vasari, for a trifling sum—by order of a friar of Sante Croce, and placed by his wish in the church of the nuns of S. Francesco, in the Via Pentolini. A hundred and fifty years later it was removed to the Uffizi by the Grand Duke Ferdinand, who restored the convent-church at his own expense, and placed a copy of the work over the high altar in the place of Andrea's masterpiece.

The picture was painted in 1517, *a few months after Andrea's marriage to the beautiful widow, Lucrezia del Fede, whose features we recognise in the Virgin's face. She is represented standing on a pedestal carved with antique bas-reliefs of harpies, to which the picture owes the name by which it is generally known of the "Madonna delle Arpie." The form is full of grace and majesty, a striped handkerchief rests on her brown hair, and a yellow shawl is wrapped round her shoulders. Two winged children play with the skirts of her blue robe. On the right S. Francis, in the brown habit of his order, turns towards them bearing a cross in his hand. On the left a youthful S. John is seen writing the gospel. On the base of the pedestal we read the following inscription:*

And: Sar: Flor: Faç:
Ad summū Regina tronū defertur in altum.
M.D.XVII.

A fine drawing, in black chalk, of the figure of S. Francis, and a study for the Virgin's left hand, evidently drawn from life, are in the Uffizi.

Size: 6 *feet* 10 *inches high, by* 5 *feet* 7 *inches wide.*

Madonna delle Arpie

Andrea del Sarto

PLATE

The Holy Family

MICHELANGELO

The Holy Family

By Michelangelo

This tempera picture, the only finished painting by Michelangelo known to be in existence, was executed in 1504, *and is a noble and original work, thoroughly characteristic of the master's genius.*

The Virgin, a strong and handsome young peasant-woman, of Tuscan type, wearing a blue mantle over a light red robe, kneels on the ground and turns round with her arms uplifted to receive the Child, whom S. Joseph, a venerable old man in a grey cloak, is in the act of handing to his mother. Behind the parapet, on the right, the young S. John is seen advancing towards the Holy Family, and in the background five nude youths are introduced with fine decorative effect. There is no attempt at charm of colour or atmosphere, but the composition is severely grand and displays all Michelangelo's unequalled mastery of drawing. The figures of the group are admirably foreshortened, and their complicated attitudes are rendered with consummate skill, while the manly beauty of the forms in the background foreshadow the genii of the Sistina. The picture, we feel all through, is the work of a painter who looked on nature with a sculptor's eyes, and felt, as he said in one of his sonnets, that "God has nowhere revealed himself more clearly than in the human form sublime."

Vasari tells us that Michelangelo painted the picture for his wealthy friend Angelo Doni, who sent him only 40 *ducats, instead of the* 60 *for which he had asked. The painter returned the money indignantly, and demanded him to return the picture, or else send him* 120 *ducats. After a prolonged wrangle, the parsimonious collector, well aware of the true worth of Michelangelo's masterpiece, reluctantly paid the money, and his "Holy Family" is now in the Uffizi Gallery.*

Diameter: 3 *feet* 10 *inches.*

Holy Family

Michelangelo

PLATE

The Madonna and Child, with Saints

PIETRO PERUGINO

The Madonna and Child, with Saints

By Pietro Perugino

This altar-piece originally adorned a chapel in the Certosa of Pavia, and belongs to the painter's best period, between 1495 *and* 1500. *A lunette of God the Father in glory is still preserved in the Certosa, but the accompanying figures of the Virgin and Archangel have disappeared. The three central panels, here reproduced, were bought, in* 1786, *by the Duke of Melzi, whose descendants sold them to the Trustees of the National Gallery, in* 1856.

The kneeling Madonna, whom we see here, robed in Perugino's favourite blue drapery, is one of his fairest creations, and is said to represent his beautiful young wife, Chiara Fancelli. The same figure is repeated in a Madonna now in the Pitti (No. 219), *while the graceful form of the Archangel Michael, in his glittering armour, appears in another of the painter's finest altar-pieces, "The Assumption," which he painted about the same time for the monks of Vallombrosa. A bistre drawing of the other archangel, Raphael, leading the young Tobias, may be seen in the British Museum, and a sheet of silver-point studies for the group, also by the painter's hand, is in the University Galleries, at Oxford.*

The beauty of the colouring, the ideal loveliness of the forms, and the charm of the landscape background, all help to make this picture one of Perugino's finest works. Fortunately it is in a fair state of preservation, although the colour of the sky has come through the figures in places.

Size: 4 feet 2 inches high; central panel, 2 feet $11\frac{1}{2}$ *inches wide; wings, 1 foot* $10\frac{1}{2}$ *inches wide.*

Madonna and Child with Saints

Perugino

PLATE

Madonna adoring the Child

FRANCESCO FRANCIA

Madonna adoring the Child

By Francesco Francia

The "Madonna of the Rose-Garden," as this Virgin is sometimes called, originally adorned the Gonzaga Palace, at Mantua, and was probably painted, early in the sixteenth century, for Isabella d'Este, for whom Francia often worked both in his capacity of goldsmith and of painter. Unlike most of the treasures of the Gonzaga collection, it remained at Mantua until 1786, *after which it changed hands repeatedly and was, at one time, the property of the Empress Josephine. In* 1815, *it passed from Malmaison into the Munich Pinacothek, where it is justly prized as one of Francia's most graceful and poetic conceptions.*

The Child lies on a red cloth, spread on the grass of a flowery lawn, encircled with a trellis of blossoming roses alive with birds, while horses are seen feeding in the green meadows beyond, and a church-tower rises among the distant woods. The Virgin stands at his side, with arms folded on her breast, and is in the act of sinking upon her knees in adoring love. The silver-grey tints of her robe are painted with transparent delicacy, and her face wears the air of wistful and tender melancholy that is peculiar to all Francia's Madonnas.

Size: 5 *m. high by* 4 *m. wide.*

Madonna and Child

Francia

PLATE

The Cowper Madonna

RAPHAEL

The Cowper Madonna

By Raphael

This little picture, which Morelli calls the loveliest of all Raphael's Virgins, belongs to the master's early Florentine days, and must have been painted soon after the "Madonna del Gran Duca," which it resembles in more points than one. It was bought by Lord Cowper, then British Minister at Florence, towards the end of the last century, and is now at Panshanger.

The Virgin, wearing a blue mantle over a red robe, and a white veil embroidered with gold loosely twisted round her head and neck, is seated on a rocky bank in a grassy meadow. The Child in her arms is of the same type as the Babe of the "Gran Duca," but fairer and smaller, and the youthful purity and charm of her own expression is mingled with awe and wonder. In the distance, a winding river flows between wooded banks to the far blue hills; and, on the right, we recognise the marble porch and campanile of the church that Cronaca had lately built on the way to S. Miniato, and which Michelangelo called his "bella villanella."

Raphael's original study for this picture, much defaced and drawn over, but still of rare interest and value, is preserved in the Accademia delle Bello Arti, at Florence, and is of the same size as the painting.

Size: 2 feet high by 1 foot 5 inches wide.

The Cowper Madonna

Raphael

PLATE

The Madonna di Foligno

RAPHAEL

The Madonna di Foligno

By Raphael

This famous altar-piece belongs to Raphael's Roman period, and was painted by him for Sigismondo Conti, the secretary and chamberlain of Pope Julius II., before the death of that prelate, in 1512. *The aged bishop, himself a native of Foligno and an historian of some repute, wished to commemorate his escape from a shell that exploded near him during the bombardment of that city, and the picture which Raphael painted at his command, was placed in the chapel of the Conti, in the Franciscan church of Ara Cœli. In* 1565 *it was removed to Foligno at the request of the donor's niece, a nun in a convent of that town, and after being taken to Paris in* 1797, *was brought back to Italy and placed in the gallery of the Vatican.*

There we see the Virgin and Child, no longer throned under a canopy, after the old Florentine and Umbrian tradition, but floating on the clouds of heaven, encircled by a golden glory of cherub heads. In the flowery meads below, S. Francis kneels at the feet of the Baptist, imploring Our Lady's protection for his followers, and S. Jerome commends the venerable bishop, who, clad in crimson robe and ermine tippet, lifts his wrinkled face to heaven with an expression of ardent devotion in his clasped hands and upturned eyes. Between the two groups of Saints, a boy angel, whose lovely face recalls the winged cherubs of the Stanze, stands on the grass with a tablet in his hands, and in the background are the distant towers of Foligno, with the fire-ball rushing through the air, while the rainbow of mercy spans the clouds.

Size: 9 *feet high by* 6 *feet* 5 *inches wide.*

The Madonna di Foligno

Raphael

PLATE

The Madonna di San Sisto

RAPHAEL

The Madonna di San Sisto

By Raphael

This Madonna, which critics of every school and age have agreed in pronouncing to be the masterpiece of Raphael's art, was painted about the year 1516, *for the friars of S. Sisto at Piacenza, probably at the request of Antonio de' Monti, Cardinal of S. Sisto. In* 1753 *it was sold by the monks to the Elector of Saxony for* £9000, *and is now the chief ornament of the Dresden Gallery.*

The picture is painted in the same light, transparent colour as Raphael's portraits of Castiglione and the Donna Velata of the Pitti, and the red chalk outlines of the figures are still visible on the canvas. The surface has been much injured by restoration, and the face of S. Barbara especially has been badly repainted, and the colour has peeled off in places. But in spite of these injuries, the composition still retains the grand and sublime beauty which distinguishes it from all other Madonnas in the world. In the face of the Virgin we recognise the features of the same unknown lady whom Raphael painted as the Donna Velata, and who appears again as Mary Magdalene in the "S. Cecilia" of Bologna.

Size: 9 *feet* 3 *inches high, by* 7 *feet wide.*

The Madonna di San Sisto

Raphael

PLATE

The Madonna and Child in Glory

ANTONIO ALLEGRI DA CORREGGIO

The Madonna and Child in Glory

By Antonio Allegri da Correggio

This brilliant little picture, which now hangs in the Uffizi, was formerly ascribed to Titian, and first restored to its true author by Morelli. The shape of the hands and ears, the folds of the Virgin's blue robe, the luminous tones of the colouring, above all, the eager gesture of the child and ardent expression of the angels playing musical instruments, are distinctive marks of Correggio's style.

The picture is clearly a youthful work, painted in those early years before his genius had lost anything of its charm and freshness, probably soon after 1512. *The colour is distinctly Ferrarese in character, and in the yellow robe of the angel on the right, we recognise the peculiar straw-colour which is seen in many of the works of Dosso Dossi, a painter who was working at the court of the Gonzagas when young Allegri visited Mantua, and with whom he was no doubt brought into close relation.*

Size: $9\frac{3}{4}$ *inches high, by* $6\frac{1}{8}$ *inches wide.*

Madonna and Child with Angels

Correggio

PLATE

Madonna and Child

BERNARDINO LUINI

Madonna and Child

By Bernardino Luini

Luini painted this picture for the Certosa of Pavia between 1515 *and* 1520, *at a time when he was strongly influenced by the works of Leonardo. Not only the type of the Virgin's face and the smile that hovers about her lips, but the enamelled surface of the picture and general character of the technique, recall the style of the great Florentine whom this Lombard master followed so closely, at one moment in his career.*

The Madonna is seated in front of a trellis of flowering roses, clad in the simple garb of a Lombard peasant girl. Her robe is red, her blue mantle is draped over her head, and her fair hair falls carelessly on her bare neck. The sweet humility of her expression and the natural movement of the child, turning to pick the columbine in the flower-pot at his side, are alike characteristic of this painter, whose perfect taste rarely fails to lend distinction to his conceptions, and of whom Mr. Ruskin has said with truth, that "he has left nothing behind him that is not lovely." This charming little picture was sold by the Carthusians of Pavia to a private owner early in the present century, and was bought for the Brera Gallery in 1825.

Size: 27½ *inches high by* 24¾ *inches wide.*

Madonna and Child

Luini

PLATE

The Holy Family

ANDREA MANTEGNA

The Holy Family

By Andrea Mantegna

This is one of a group of works which the great Paduan master painted soon after the completion of his "Triumphs," probably about 1494 *or* 1495. *It was discovered in Italy by the late Sir Charles Eastlake, after whose death it was sold by his executors to the Directors of the Dresden Gallery for the sum of* £2000.

Both the grouping of the figures and the dark tones of the background give the picture a strong resemblance to a marble bas-relief, and this impression is deepened by the severely classic beauty of the types. The Virgin turns with motherly tenderness towards the Child, who stands on her lap, with one arm round her neck, while the aged S. Joseph and a venerable S. Elizabeth are seen behind, and in the right hand corner of the picture, the little S. John points upward to the Child.

Size: 75½ *centm. high by* 66½ *centm. wide.*

The Holy Family

Mantegna

PLATE

The Madonna della Vittoria

ANDREA MANTEGNA

The Madonna della Vittoria

By Andrea Mantegna

This magnificent work was painted to commemorate the victory which Francesco Gonzaga claimed to have gained over the French king, Charles VIII., at Fornovo. The young Marquis, who narrowly escaped with his life on this occasion, had vowed to erect a church to the Virgin if he were victorious, and exactly a year afterwards, on the 16th of July, 1496, Mantegna's ex-voto "Madonna" was placed over the high altar of the new church. Three hundred years later, the French carried off the picture, which had been originally painted to celebrate their defeat, to Paris, where it still remains among the treasures of the Louvre.

The Virgin, wearing a blue hood and mantle, is seated on a throne, richly adorned with bas-reliefs and precious stones, under a canopy of foliage and fruit, decorated with corals, and alive with twittering birds. The Child on her knee blesses the kneeling Marquis, while S. Elizabeth, the patroness of his wife, Isabella d'Este, stands opposite with the young S. John, and the protectors of Mantua, Andrew and Longinus are seen behind. But the most striking figures in the group are the warrior-saints, Michael and George, who stand on either side, holding the hem of the Virgin's mantle, and, with their golden locks and shining armour, are the very flower of Christian chivalry.

Size: 2 *m.* 80 *cent. by* 1 *m.* 36 *cent. wide.*

The Madonna della Vittoria

Mantegna

PLATE

The Madonna and Child

GIOVANNI BELLINI

The Madonna and Child

By Giovanni Bellini

The Madonnas of Giovanni Bellini have a distinct character of their own. Much as they vary in form and expression, they are all alike distinguished by a certain simplicity and dignity, together with a beautiful tenderness of feeling and motherly love.

This Virgin is one of those numerous half-length figures which he painted for private owners, and belonged for three hundred years to the Contarini family. The words Joannes Bellinus, and the date 1487, *are inscribed upon the panel, but in Signor Morelli's opinion, the latter is a modern forgery, and the picture was painted many years later, probably about* 1504. *The Madonna wears a white veil and blue mantle over her head. A dark green curtain bordered with red hangs behind her, and a pollard elm is seen growing on either side, while beyond we catch a glimpse of green meadows and far-away blue hills. The picture is painted in oils on wood, and is now in the Academy of Venice.*

Size: 28½ *inches high by* 22 *inches wide.*

Madonna and Child

Bellini

PLATE

The Madonna and Sleeping Child, with Two Boy-Angels

ALVISE VIVARINI

The Madonna and Sleeping Child, with Two Boy-Angels

By Alvise Vivarini

This picture, in the sacristy of the Redentore Church at Venice, was formerly ascribed to Giovanni Bellini, but is now recognised as the work of the last of the Vivarini. It must have been painted about 1495 *or* 1496, *for while the motive of the sleeping Babe appears in Alvise's altar-piece of* 1489 *at Vienna, the rich soft colouring and greater freedom of treatment marks this panel as a work of his later years.*

The symmetry of the group and severe refinement of the Virgin's face are in the painter's most characteristic manner, and the fruit on the marble parapet and the bird perched on the hanging, recall the work of the earlier Murano-Squarcionesque masters; but the sleeping Child and the boy-angels, one in yellow, the other in blue, playing their tiny mandolines, have all the charm of Bellini's art. The Virgin wears a red robe, and the hanging behind her is of a deep green colour.

Size: 2 feet 9 inches high by 2 feet 7 inches wide.

Lemercier graveur. Printed in Paris

Madonna and Sleeping Child with Angels

Visarini

PLATE

The Madonna and Saints

GIORGIONE

The Madonna di Castelfranco

By Giorgione

This altar-piece was painted in 1504 *for the Costanzi chapel in the church of Castelfranco, by order of Tuzio Costanzo, a gallant soldier who had fought valiantly against the Turks in the service of Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus. The arms of the Costanzi may still be seen on the pedestal of the Virgin's throne, and the warrior saint, Liberale, who stands on her left, wears the form and features of Tuzio's son, Matteo, who had joined the armies of the Republic at the head of fifty lances, and had lately died at Ravenna, in the flower of his youth. The old church of Castelfranco was pulled down in the last century, but Giorgione's picture was preserved and placed over the high altar in the new building.*

Besides being of rare value as an undoubted example of Giorgione's style, this famous altar-piece marks a new epoch in Venetian art. The traditional type of the old school is adopted, the composition is as religious and majestic as Gian Bellini's own altar-pieces, but the original genius of the young master of Castelfranco is evident in every detail. The wealth of ornament and architectural decoration common to the old Venetian school, has all been swept away. The Madonna is set on a marble throne raised high above the altar, and draped with Persian carpets of fantastic pattern. A long red mantle falls in careless folds to her feet, and a white veil frames the pure oval of her face. At her feet are S. Francis in grey cowl and girdle, and S. Liberale, in armour of glittering steel, bearing a red pennon with a white cross in his hand. Their forms throw long shadows on the black and white squares of the marble pavement, and over the crimson hangings of the screen behind we look out on a fair woodland valley, where the towers of Castelfranco rise under the evening sky, and a belt of quivering light gleams on the distant sea. The loveliness of the youthful Virgin, and the knightly grace of the soldier saint, the eloquent gesture with which S. Francis proclaims his love to God and man, and the romantic charm of the landscape, alike reveal the exquisite refinement and perfect balance that mark Giorgione's art. The following lines were formerly inscribed in red chalk on the back of the canvas, but were unfortunately effaced, a few years ago, by the clumsy hand of a modern restorer:

"*Vieni, O Cecilia,*
Vieni, t'affretta
Il tuo t'aspetta
Giorgio."

Whether Cecilia was the name of Giorgione's beloved, and whether, as tradition says, it is her face which he has here painted, we cannot tell; but the same refined and spiritual type appears again, both in his "Virgin of Madrid," and in his last picture, the "Sleeping Venus" of the Dresden Gallery.

Size: 6 *feet* 6 *inches high by* 4 *feet* 9 *inches wide.*

Lemercier graveur. Printed in Paris.

Madonna and Child with Saints

Giorgione

PLATE

The Madonna and Child, with Saints

PALMA VECCHIO

The Madonna and Child, with Saints

By Palma Vecchio

This group is one of those Santa Conversazioni which the Bergamasque painter was the first to introduce, and which afterwards became so popular in Venetian art. It belongs to Palma's best period, about 1520, *and was probably painted rather earlier than his other works in the Dresden Gallery. It was found by Guarienti, in* 1749, *in the Casa Pisano, in the parish of S. Stefano of Venice and bought by him for the Elector of Saxony.*

The Madonna stands in front of a green hanging, clasping the Child in her arms, and reaching out one hand to take a scroll offered her by the Baptist, who presses forward with eager face and questioning eyes. S. Katharine stands between them, resting one hand on the wheel of her martyrdom, and looking down with a sweet and serious expression. Her fair complexion, and rippling waves of golden hair, recall Palma's favourite type of Venetian woman, but her features are more refined and her expression is more thoughtful than most of his faces, and the picture deserves to rank among his finest conceptions. On the left we catch a glimpse of the rocky heights and mountain villages of Val Brembo, the painter's own home in the hills of Bergamo.

Size: 67 *inches high, by* 97½ *inches wide.*

The Holy Family

Palma Vecchio

PLATE

The Holy Family and Saints

LORENZO LOTTO

The Holy Family and Saints

By Lorenzo Lotto

This is the only "Santa Conversazione" in the style introduced by Palma that we have from Lotto's hand, and affords a fresh proof of the influence which the Bergamasque artist exerted over him at one period of his career. It was painted about 1528, *soon after Lotto had returned to Venice from Bergamo, and, as Mr. Berenson has pointed out, bears a marked resemblance to the "Annunciation," at Recanati, and the Rospigliosi Venus, both of which belong to this year.*

The scene is laid in a sunny meadow, where the Virgin and her companions are resting in the shade of a spreading oak-tree, while the lights and shadows of a summer day play over the landscape. The Virgin reclines on the ground, clad in a pale blue robe, which falls in large folds over her feet; and a lovely flaxen-haired angel, in rose-pink draperies, bends forward to place a crown of starry blossoms on her brow. The Child in her arms raises one hand in blessing, and lays the other on a book that is held open by S. Katharine, a handsome Venetian maiden wearing a green robe and jewelled cross, and recalling the portrait known as the "Holford Lucrezia" in type and feature. At her side S. James kneels, robed in a grey tunic and red mantle, holding the spear of martyrdom, and clasping his hands together in an attitude of deep devotion.

Size: 1 *m.* 12 *cent. high, by* 1 *m.* 48 *cent. wide.*

Printed in Paris

The Holy Family and Saints

Lotto

PLATE

The Holy Family with Four Saints

TITIAN

The Holy Family with Four Saints

By Titian

This picture was bought, in 1747, *for the Dresden Gallery, by Zanetti and Guarienti, from the Grimani family of Venice, and was always known as a Titian until Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle pronounced it to be the work of Schiavone. Morelli, however, restored the picture to its true author, and there can be no doubt that we have here a work painted by the young master of Cadore, while Giorgione's influence was still strong upon him.*

The Madonna, wearing a white veil on her head and a flowing blue mantle over her red tunic and pink sleeves, stands in front of a green curtain, holding the Child in her arms, and gazing with eager kindliness at the advancing Magdalen. Opposite, S. Paul, a dark and bearded figure, is leaning on his sword, while the aged S. Jerome, clad in red drapery, looks up at the crucifix hanging on a pillar behind him, and the Magdalen stands between them, with the vase of precious ointment in her hands. A green mantle is loosely draped over the folds of her white robe, her bright chestnut locks are held back by a violet band, and with her lovely profile and downcast eyes she is one of the fairest creations in all Venetian art. In the opposite corner we see the Baptist, clad in his raiment of camel's hair and leather girdle, standing behind the Virgin, holding the right arm of the Child.

Size: 1 *m.* 38 *cent. high, by* 1 *m.* 91 *cent. wide.*

The Holy Family and Saints

Titian

PLATE

The Annunciation

FRA ANGELICO

The Annunciation

By Fra Angelico

This fresco of the Annunciation, perhaps the most beautiful of all Fra Angelico's versions of this favourite subject, adorns the wall of the upper corridor in his own convent of S. Marco, and bears a Latin inscription, inviting all passers-by to say an Ave to the Blessed Mother:

"*Virginis intactæ dum veneris ante figuram,*
Prætereundo cave ne sileatur Ave."

The Angelic Salutation takes place in an open loggia with slender Corinthian pillars closely resembling the new portico of the Annunziata Church, which the painter's friend Michelozzo, the architect of S. Marco, had lately built for the Servi brothers. Here the Archangel Gabriel who, in Dante's words, has brought the long desired message of peace from God to man, stands with outspread wings, as if but just alighted on the ground, looking earnestly into Mary's face, and awaiting her answer on bended knee. His pink robe is edged with gold and the plumes of his many-coloured wings are delicately shaded with tints of rose and violet, green and yellow. The Virgin is seated on a rough wooden stool, rapt in devout contemplation. Her fair hair falls on her neck and a long blue mantle flows over her white robe. She folds her hands meekly on her breast and looks up with sudden awe and wonder at the heavenly Messenger who had called her blessed among women. A door behind opens into a cell with one small window, and through the arches of the loggia we look out into the convent-garden and see the sunshine on the daisies and pinks in the grass, and the roses and cypresses of the background.

Size: 7 feet 4 inches high by 9 feet 8 inches wide.

Lemercier graveur

Printed in Paris

The Annunciation

Fra Angelico

PLATE

The Annunciation.

CARLO CRIVELLI

The Annunciation

By Carlo Crivelli

This altar-piece was painted by the Venetian master in 1486, *for the church of the Santissima Annunziata at Ascoli, and was bought in* 1790, *by the founder of the Solly collection. In* 1847, *it was acquired by Lord Taunton, who presented it in* 1864, *to the National Gallery.*

The picture is remarkable for admirable finish and gorgeous colour. So elaborate are the accessories that we almost lose sight of the actual event in the splendour of the surroundings. Mary's chamber forms part of a stately palazzo, adorned with rich marble and gilding with elegant pilasters and stone carved frieze. A peacock spreads his tail over the fretted cornice of the wall, an Eastern carpet hangs over the balustrade, and a dove is perched on the rod above, with a birdcage suspended at the side. The Angel Gabriel, clad in sumptuous brocades adorned with feathers and jewels, kneels in the street outside, and S. Emidius, the first bishop of Ascoli, is seen, wearing a gold embroidered cape and jewelled mitre, and bearing a model of the city of Ascoli in his hands. In the background are a group of citizens, intent on their daily business. A red-robed merchant stands on the steps, conversing with two hooded friars, and a child peeps round the corner of the parapet. One grave lawyer paces up and down the street, another is seen on the terrace above, reading a letter to a priest at his side, and happy youths and maidens walk among the cypress-trees of the sunny garden beyond.

At the foot of the picture we read the following inscription: "Opus Karoli Crivelli Veneti, 1486," *together with the words, "Libertas Ecclesiastica," in allusion to the recent decree by which Pope Sixtus IV. had granted the city Ascoli her freedom and recognised her as an independent republic under the papal protection. The Feast of the Annunciation, on which day the papal bull had been promulgated, was henceforth regarded as the birthday of the new republic, and Crivelli painted his picture to commemorate the great event.*

Size: 6 *feet* 10½ *inches high, by* 4 *feet* 10½ *inches wide.*

The Annunciation

Crivelli

PLATE

The Annunciation

RAPHAEL

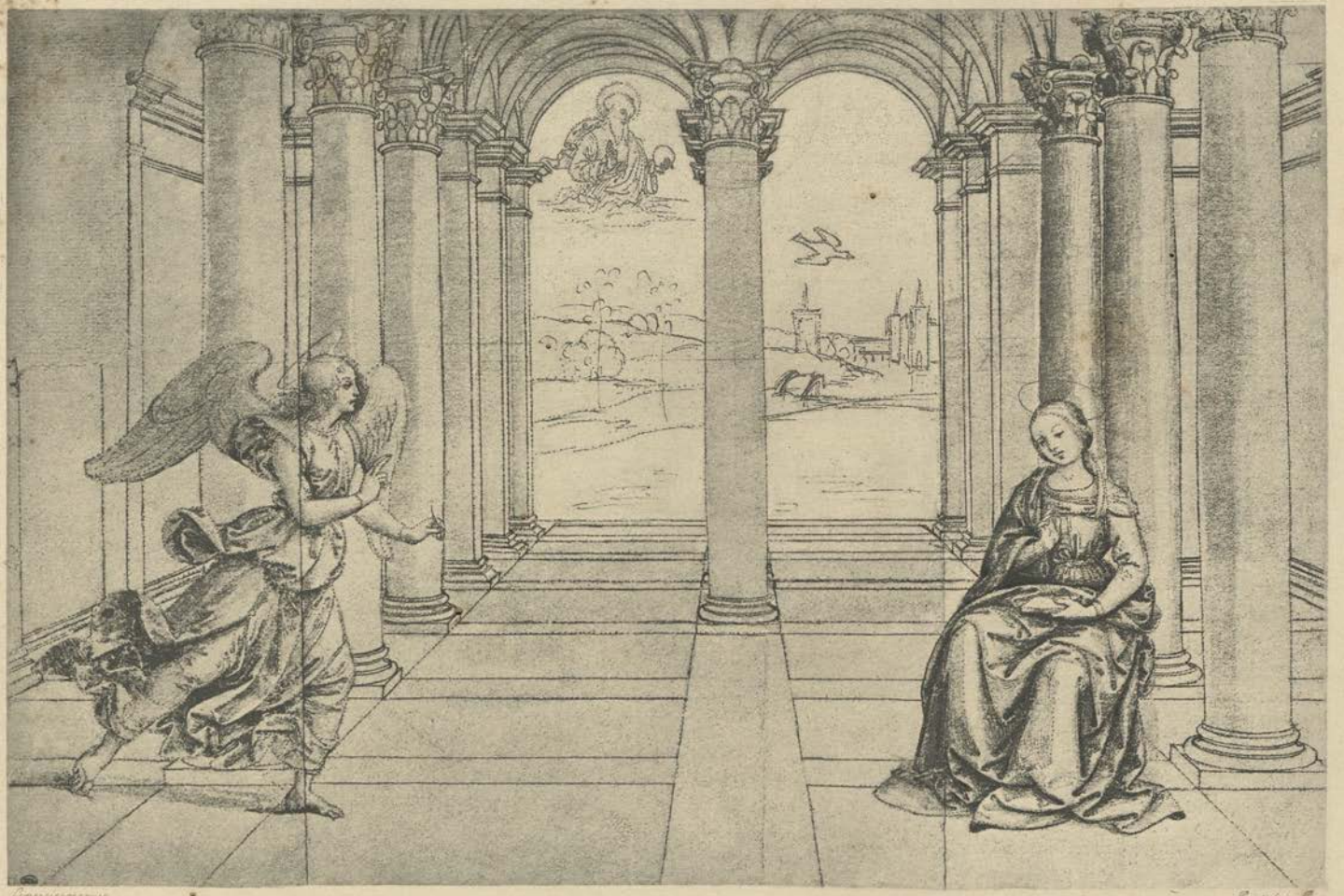
The Annunciation

A Drawing by Raphael

This drawing is a study for one of the subjects in the predella originally attached to the altar-piece of the "Coronation of the Virgin," which Raphael painted in 1502, *for a chapel in the Duomo of Perugia, by order of a widowed lady of the Oddi family. The predella consisting of three subjects is now in the Vatican, and the cartoons are scattered abroad. The drawing of the "Presentation" is at Oxford, and a fragment of the "Adoration of the Magi" is preserved at Stockholm, while the study for the "Annunciation" here reproduced is in the Salle des Bôites, in the Louvre.*

The influence of Perugino is strongly marked in this drawing by the young Raphael, but there is a refinement and simplicity, a sense of ideal beauty, which is altogether his own. The lowly Virgin is seated with her book on her knee under a spacious colonnade of lofty Corinthian pillars, and the joyous Angel advances towards her with outspread wings and swift, bird-like movements. The wealth of decoration and elaborate ornament common to older Umbrian paintings has given way to a simpler and truer feeling for nature. The long shadows of evening fall upon the brown squares of the marble floor, and through the open loggia we look out on a fair valley, where a river winds its way under the castellated towers of Urbino.

Size: 11 *inches high, by* 17 *inches wide.*



The Annunciation

Raphael

PLATE

The Visitation

MARIOTTO ALBERTINELLI

The Visitation

By Mariotto Albertinelli

The Visitation was a favourite subject in early Italian art, and was painted by all the old Florentine masters from Giotto to Ghirlandajo. Mariotto Albertinelli has followed the traditional treatment closely, but has skilfully adapted the old types to the style of his own day. The attitude of Mary and Elizabeth is copied from Giotto's version of the subject, in the Arena Chapel. The porch of Elizabeth's house is transformed into a stately Renaissance portico, through which we look out on blue sky and fleecy clouds, and the groups of spectators generally introduced by earlier masters are removed, only the two figures essential to the story being retained. The composition is arranged with masterly skill, the forms of the meeting women are framed in by the archway and the graceful folds of the drapery show how much Albertinelli had learnt from his friend and comrade, Fra Bartolommeo.

The Virgin is wrapt in a long blue mantle, while S. Elizabeth wears a white hood and orange-coloured mantle over a dark green gown. The eager action of the aged Saint, as she bends forward to salute the Mother of her Lord, and the winning expression of love and sympathy on her face, are very striking and prove that in these golden days of art, even second-rate masters could occasionally attain the highest excellence. The date of the picture, 1503, is inscribed on the pilasters on either side. It was painted for a Congregation of Priests and placed in the church of S. Martin and S. Elizabeth, where it remained until 1786, when it was removed to the Uffizi Gallery.

A predella by the painter, in which the Annunciation, Nativity and Presentation are all represented, also hangs in the Uffizi, and a drawing of the subject in red chalk may be seen in the collection of drawings, in the same gallery.

Size: 2 m. 31 cent. high, by 1 m. 47 cent. wide.

The Visitation

Albertinelli

PLATE

The Nativity

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

The Nativity

By Piero della Francesca

This picture was formerly in the possession of the Marini-Franceschi, a family lineally descended from the painter and still living in his native town of Borgo San Sepolero. It was sold by them in 1861 *to Mr. Alexander Barker, and bought for the National Gallery at the Barker sale, in* 1874, *in spite of the opposition raised on account of the bad state of the picture. The Umbrian master's work has certainly suffered severely at the restorer's hands. The surface of the picture has been destroyed in places and the restorer has forgotten to repaint the pupils in the eyes of the shepherd standing behind the Virgin. But in spite of these blemishes, Piero's "Nativity" retains much of its primitive charm. The conception is strikingly original, the attitudes and gestures are perfectly natural, the very folds of the draperies unlike the traditional type. The blues and greys of the colouring are exquisitely soft and harmonious, the shepherds wear the garb of Umbrian peasants, while the angels with their thick locks and bare feet and ankles are distinctly human in type and touch their lutes and sing their Glorias with all the skill of trained musicians. S. Joseph sits on the ass's saddle, crossing his leg over his knee and nursing one foot in his hand, and in the ruined stable behind, the ox pushes his head forward, and the ass brays loudly, as if seeking to join in the angelic concert. Every detail in the background, the carefully drawn churches and roofs of Arezzo, the deep shadow thrown by the pent-house roof, the hilly landscape and cypresses growing along the river-side, the birds and plants in the foreground, reveal the same close observation of natural fact, the same knowledge of perspective and chiaroscuro.*

The artist of this Nativity, it is plain, was a man who thought for himself and painted things as they appeared to him and not as others saw them. But he was far from being a mere realist. The tone of his work is finely and distinctly religious. This kneeling Virgin in her short blue robe, this shepherd pointing heavenwards as he tells the wonderful story, these Angels, who, strong and fair as the sons of the morning, chaunt their glad pæans, careless of their audience and intent only on their song, have the calm and serene beauty that belongs to the noblest art. And this quality cannot fail to give the picture, in spite of its ruined condition, a place among the works that will live for all time.

Size: 4 *feet* 1 *inch, by* 4 *feet wide.*

Printed in Italy

The Nativity

Piero della Francesca

PLATE

The Nativity

FRANCESCO FRANCIA

The Nativity

By Francesco Francia

This "Nativity," now in the Gallery of Bologna, was painted by Francia, in 1499, *for the church of the Misericordia, a confraternity of noble Bolognese citizens who devoted themselves to works of mercy. The donor of the picture, Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio, Archdeacon of Bologna and papal proto-notary, who had lately returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is represented, kneeling on the left with the red cross on his mantle, while in the youthful shepherd, crowned with oak-leaves, we recognise the features of Francia's intimate friend, Girolamo Casio, the poet-goldsmith who received the laurel crown from the hands of Pope Clement VII. S. Augustine, in mitre and richly embroidered cope, kneels on the right; S. Joseph, clad in red and yellow, stands on the opposite side, leaning on his staff; while in S. Francis of Assisi, clasping his hands in prayer and gazing devoutly at the Child, we have, it is said, a likeness of the painter himself, who appears standing behind the proto-notary in the form of his patron saint.*

The landscape background is remarkably varied and interesting. The rocky steep, with the solitary pine-tree that Francia generally introduces, is still here, but a wide valley opens beyond, and a river flows between park-like avenues and grassy glades where cattle are feeding and human life is stirring among the woods. A campanile and cottage roofs are seen in the trees to the right, and a lofty range of blue Apennines rises in the distance.

Size: 7 feet high, by 6 feet 3 inches wide.

The Nativity

Francia

PLATE

The Nativity

LORENZO DI CRĒDI

The Nativity

By Lorenzo di Credi

This Nativity was originally painted for the convent of the nuns "delle Murate," and is now in the Accademia delle belle Arti, in the same room as Lorenzo di Credi's larger "Adoration of the Shepherds." The subject was a favourite one with this "piagnone" master, who, throughout his long life, kept strictly to the precepts laid down by Savonarola. No portraits of contemporary personages are introduced, no rich ornament or sumptuous accessories adorn the robe of the lowly Virgin, who kneels in adoration of the new-born Child. Her mantle is blue, lined with yellow, her robe is of the same deep red as the cloth that covers the sheaf of corn, on which the Child's head is pillowed. An aged and white-headed S. Joseph, wearing a yellow mantle lined with red over a green tunic, and two dainty angels with curled locks kneeling at Mary's side, are the only other figures in the picture. A sunny landscape, such as this gentle painter loved to introduce in his works, is seen in the distance, with a river winding among the woods and hills, and castle towers rising on its banks. On the left, the Angel is seen flying through the air to announce the glad tidings of great joy, and the shepherds on the mountain-side start back in fear at this sudden vision.

Size: 4 *feet* 2 *inches high, by* 4 *feet* 8 *inches wide.*

The Nativity

Lorenzo di Credi

PLATE

The Adoration of the Magi

GENTILE DA FABRIANO

The Adoration of the Magi

By Gentile da Fabriano

This beautiful altar-piece was painted by the Umbrian master, Gentile da Fabriano, who was at that time living in Florence, for the wealthy citizen, Palla Strozzi, and was presented by him to the monks of Vallombrosa. In later years, Gentile's picture was removed to the Trinità church, and now hangs in the Accademia delle belle Arti.

The "Adoration of the Three Kings," which was so favourite a subject with primitive masters, here takes the form of one of those pageants that were dear to Florentine hearts. Nothing which can heighten the splendour of the scene is lacking. The joy of the happy May-time, of singing birds and opening flowers, all lend their charm to the festive procession. The crowns and robes of the kings are richly studded with jewels, their mantles are of crimson and gold; a great company of retainers, bearing falcons on their wrists, and leading camels and horses, follow in their train. The youthful monarch standing up in the centre, with his golden hair and shining raiment, his graceful and noble air, is the very model of a mediæval knight. His greyhound lies on the daisied grass at his feet, and one fair page holds the bridle of his charger at his side, while another fastens the golden spurs on his feet. The blue-robed Virgin is seated under the pent-house roof in front of a ruined temple, with S. Joseph in a yellow mantle watching over her, and two lovely maidens at her side. The Child lays his little hand on the head of the grey-bearded king who prostrates himself at his feet, and the Star, in the shape of a sun with golden rays, is seen immediately over the group. All the faces wear the same serious and pensive air, and are touched with that mystic feeling which is so marked a feature of Umbrian art. In the fine-looking man standing on the right of the young king, wearing a red cap and black gold-spangled doublet, we see the painter's own portrait, and on the base of the richly decorated frame we read the words:

"*Opus Gentilis Fabriano, 1423, Mensis Mai.*"

Three separate scenes from the journey of the Magi appear in the upper part of the picture. On the left, the Three Kings stand on the mountain-top watching the Star which has suddenly risen in the east. In the centre, the procession winds its way up the steep ascent to the gates of Jerusalem, and on the right they are seen returning to their own land.

The predella below originally consisted of three subjects. One of these, the "Presentation in the Temple," is now in the Louvre, while the other two, a "Nativity," and a charming little picture of the "Flight into Egypt," with the sun setting in a mountainous landscape, are still attached to the central panel.

Size: 3 *m. high by* 2 *m.* 82 *cent. wide.*

The Adoration of the Magi

Gentile da Fabriano

PLATE

The Adoration of the Magi

DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO

The Adoration of the Magi

By Domenico Ghirlandajo

The ancient hospital of the Innocents, on the Piazza dell' Annunziata, is well known to all travellers. On the brown walls without are Andrea della Robbia's blue and white medallions of swaddled babes, and the chapel within is adorned with one of Ghirlandajo's best altar-pieces.

This fine work was executed in 1488, *when the master was at the height of his fame, and is painted in tempera, like all his easel pictures. The colour is gay and brilliant, and the scene is enriched with those splendid and elaborate accessories, in which this painter took delight. Stately personages, wearing robes of rich brocade and gold chains, stand on either side; mounted horsemen follow in the train of the kings from the far East. Two of the Magi kneel in deep devotion at the feet of the Child-Christ, the third, a handsome youth with a gold cup in his hands, stands on the left. The pent-house is transformed into a Renaissance loggia, and opens on a gay and varied prospect. Ships are sailing on the broad river that flows between rocky shores, the spires and domes of a great city rise upon its banks, and the pyramid of Cestius and arches of the Coliseum, are seen among a group of classical monuments on the left. A choir of Angels, seated on the clouds above the pent-house roof, sing the Gloria in Excelsis, from an open scroll, and smaller representations of the Angel appearing to the Shepherds, and of the Massacre of the Innocents, are introduced in the background. But the most charming figures in the whole picture are the two little white-robed Innocents, who are seen kneeling in the background, each with the sword-cut in his head, and the glory round his brow, and whom S. John the Baptist and S. John the Evangelist present to the Child-King, for whom their lives were laid down.*

Size: 8 *feet* 3 *inches high,* 7 *feet* 9 *inches wide.*

Amsterdam Cramer

Painted in Paris

The Adoration of the Magi

Ghirlandajo

PLATE

The Adoration of the Magi

BERNARDINO LUINI

The Adoration of the Magi

By Bernardino Luini

This version of the oft-repeated subject, which the Lombard master painted in fresco, on the wall of the sanctuary of Saronno, is remarkable alike for the freshness and originality of the conception and for the brilliancy of the execution. It unites the splendour and festive gaiety of the Renaissance, with that tender and reverent feeling that marks all Luini's work.

The scene is laid in front of a ruined stable, and the Virgin, wearing a pale blue mantle over a pink robe, is seated on a fragment of crumbling wall. The Child in her arms turns with joyous eagerness to the aged king clad in orange mantle trimmed with ermine, on his right, and S. Joseph, instead of remaining a passive witness of the scene, gazes with uplifted hand, in evident surprise, at the strangers who come to worship at the cradle of Bethlehem. The third king is represented as a handsome negro wearing a gold crown on his white turban, and attended by black slaves, and camels and giraffes are introduced among the long train of riders slowly descending the winding road that leads down the hillside.

A choir of five angel-boys, standing on the clouds above, sing the Gloria with serious and intent faces, and make us feel, in Mr. Ruskin's words, "that there might be danger of a false note, if they were less attentive."

Size: 11 *feet* 6 *inches high, by* 9 *feet wide.*

The Adoration of the Magi

Luini

PLATE

The Circumcision

LUCA SIGNORELLI

The Circumcision

By Luca Signorelli

This altar-piece, one of the few of Signorelli's works which is to be seen north of the Alps, was originally painted for the church of S. Francesco at Volterra, probably about 1491, *when the Cortona master visited this old Etruscan city. Vasari, who was related to Signorelli, and remembered seeing him at his father's house in Arezzo, describes the work in terms of high praise, but calls it a fresco and says that Sodoma re-painted the figure of the Child. Both of these statements are inaccurate. The picture is painted in oils on wood, and an inscription at the back of the panel records that the figure of the Child was re-painted in* 1732 *by an inferior artist named Cigna.*

The scene is laid in the courts of the Temple, before an arched recess, paved with coloured marbles and decorated with circular bas-reliefs and carved arabesques. The Virgin, clad in a dark blue robe, holds the Child in her lap while S. Joseph leans on his staff at her side, and in the background the high priest lifts his hands to heaven, with a look of deep devotion on his face. Several women are introduced among the assistants. The heads are full of vigour and character, the colour, as usual in Signorelli's works, is very dark, and has been further blackened by time and smoke.

The picture was brought to Scotland in the last century, and after remaining during many years, in the Duke of Hamilton's palace near Glasgow, was bought for the National Gallery, in 1882.

Size: 8 *feet* 6 *inches high, by* 5 *feet* 11 *inches wide.*

Printed in Paris

The Circumcision

Signorelli

PLATE

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

VITTORE CARPACCIO

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

By Vittore Carpaccio

In this noble altar-piece, which originally adorned the church of S. Giobbe, and is now in the Academy of Venice, Carpaccio rivals the art of his great contemporary, Giovanni Bellini, and comes nearer to him than in any other of his works.

The apse of the Temple, where the event takes place, is richly decorated with mosaics, and lighted by hanging lamps. On one side, the aged Simeon is seen advancing to greet the new-born Christ, clad in a richly embroidered dalmatic of gold and purple brocade, and followed by two priests. On the other hand, the Virgin, wearing a long, blue mantle, lined with green, over a red robe, and a white veil on her head, bears the Child Jesus in her arms. Two maidens, with lovely faces and flowing locks, attend her, carrying a basket of young turtle-doves, and three golden-haired children, clad in bright hued robes, and playing musical instruments, are seated on the marble steps below. A cartellino, bearing the inscription, "Victor Carpathius, M.D.X.," is placed on the lowest step.

Size: 14 *feet high, by* 7 *feet* 3 *inches wide.*

The Presentation in the Temple

Carpaccio

PLATE

The Flight into Egypt

FRA ANGELICO

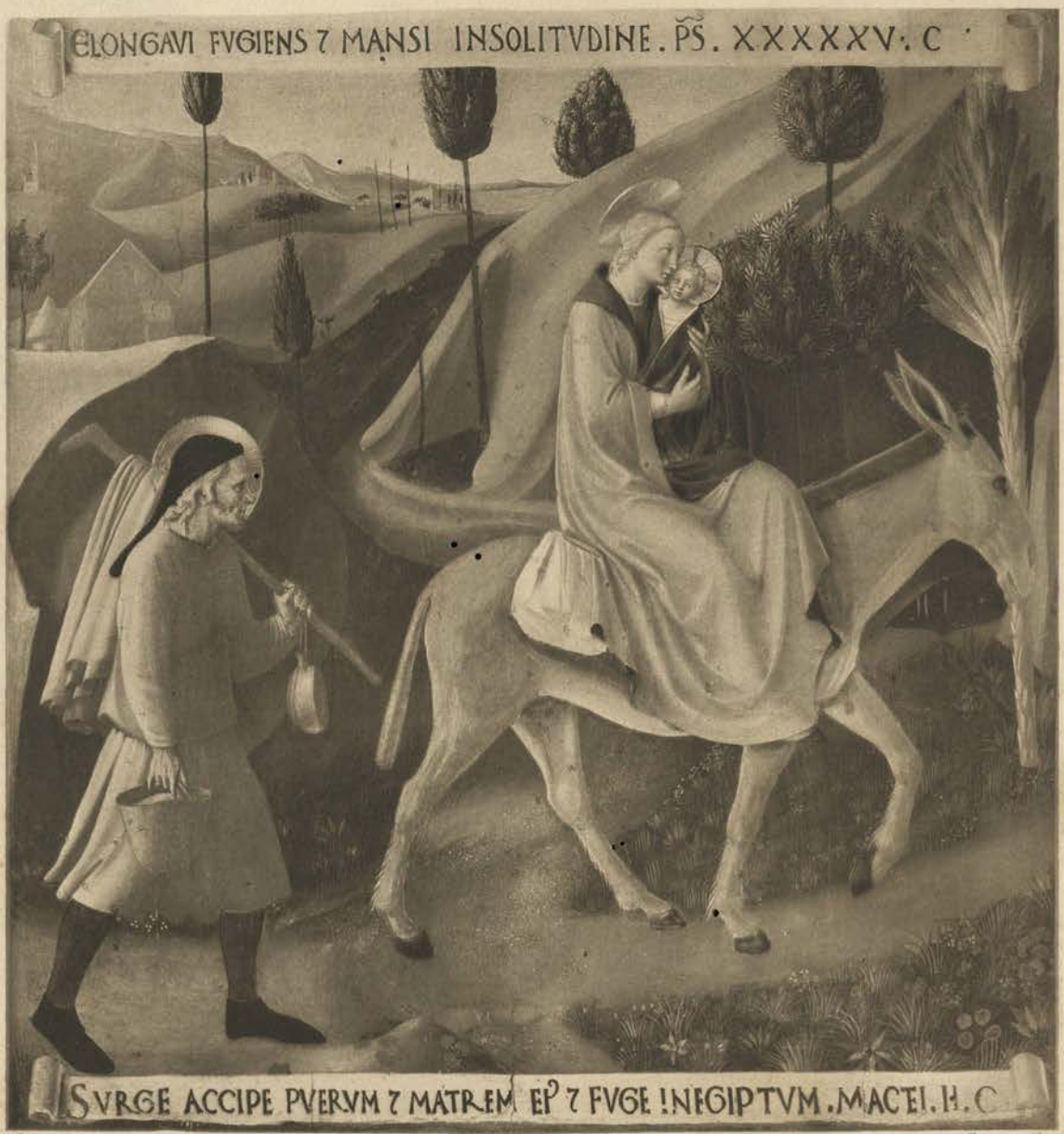
The Flight into Egypt

By Fra Angelico

This little panel is one of the series of scenes from the "Life of Christ," painted by Fra Angelico to adorn the presses which held the church plate of the Servi brothers in the church of the Annunziata, and is now in the Accademia delle belle Arti, in Florence.

The story is told with the Dominican master's habitual directness ana simplicity. The Virgin, wrapt in a long, blue mantle, clasps the Child tenderly in her arms, and S. Joseph follows, clad in a yellow tunic, and bearing his cloak on his staff in one hand and a basket in the other. Cypress trees and olives grow along the rocky path that winds over the steep mountain-side, and wild flowers and roses blossom at the travellers' feet.

Size: 15½ inches high, by 14½ inches wide.



The Flight into Egypt

Fra Angelico

PLATE

Christ among the Doctors

BERNARDINO LUINI

Christ among the Doctors

By Bernardino Luini

This fresco in the pilgrimage-church of S. Maria at Saronno, is one of Luini's most original conceptions, and belongs to his best and ripest period. The moment which he has chosen is the return of the Blessed Virgin and S. Joseph, to seek the Son whom they have lost and whom they now find, surrounded by the doctors in the Temple. In the centre of the picture, the youthful Christ, a boy in years, but already an inspired teacher, stands on a tribune clad in blue mantle and crimson tunic, and turns to his Mother with the words: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" On the right we see the Virgin, who has made her way through the assembled doctors and looks appealingly at her Son, as she asks the touching question: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Her veil and mantle are blue, her robe is of a deep rose-pink, and S. Joseph's aged figure is dimly seen in the background, leaning on a long staff. On the left are a group of doctors, whose eager and interested faces display the varied emotions with which they have heard the youthful Teacher's impassioned words. Some appear convinced, others are doubtful, some gaze upon Him, full of wonder at His wisdom, while others look at the open pages of the Scriptures and seem to seek confirmation of His words.

The beauty and animation of the different personages, the fine modelling of the forms and richness of the colouring, all help to make this fresco one of the Lombard painter's most remarkable works.

Size: 7 feet high, by 12 feet 6 inches wide.

Christ among the Doctors in the Temple

Luini

PLATE

The Marriage at Cana

PAOLO VERONESE

The Marriage at Cana

By Paolo Veronese

This group is taken from the most famous of the huge banquet-scenes that we associate with the name of Veronese, the Marriage at Cana, which he originally painted for the refectory of S. Giorgio Maggiore at Venice. The contract was signed on the 6th of June, 1562, and the picture finished by the 8th of September, 1563. Paolo received 324 ducats and a pipe of wine as the price of his labours, besides the cost of the materials employed, and of his own living during the time spent upon the work.

The Marriage feast takes place in a stately portico, commanding a noble prospect of neighbouring palaces and blue skies, and the guests are seated at a horse-shoe table. Portraits of the Emperor Charles V., of Francis I. and his Queen Eleonora of Austria, of the Sultan Soliman and Queen Mary of England, and many other eminent personages, are introduced among the company. In the foreground, immediately under the figures of Christ and His Mother, are a group of musicians, in whom we recognise portraits of the foremost Venetian painters of the day. Paolo himself, a tall figure in a yellow mantle, is playing the violoncello; Tintoretto, a bearded man, holding a similar instrument, bends down to whisper in his friend's ear; while Jacopo Bassano blows the flute, and the aged Titian, wearing a red robe, is seen on the right, playing the double bass.

This enormous picture was carried off by the French invaders in 1797, and from that time has been one of the chief decorations of the Salon Carré, in the Louvre. The figures are larger than life, and the whole canvas measures 20 feet high by 30 feet wide.

The Marriage of Cana

Paolo Veronese

PLATE

The Transfiguration

FRA ANGELICO

The Transfiguration

By Fra Angelico

In early representations of the Transfiguration the form of Christ is generally seen lifted above the earth. Sometimes a jewelled cross takes the place of the Divine Person, as in the mosaics of S. Apollinare Classe, at Ravenna. In this fresco of the subject, which Fra Angelico painted on the wall of one of the cells in his own convent of S. Marco, he has improved on the traditional type, and represented Christ with His arms outstretched, as if upon the cross, raised high on the clouds above the Mount of Transfiguration. His white-robed form is encircled with the "mandorla" or almond-shaped glory of golden light, and is rendered more impressive by its imposing stature, which considerably exceeds the size of the other figures in the foreground. Moses and Elias are seen on either side, and at the foot of the Mount are the three Apostles, S. Peter, S. James, and S. John, kneeling in devout adoration, and shading their eyes from the sudden blaze of light that streams from their Master's glorified form. Between the Apostles and Prophets are the Blessed Virgin and S. Dominic, whom the Angelic Painter introduces throughout this series of frescoes, gazing in pious contemplation at the mystery that takes place before their eyes.

Size: 6 *feet* 5 *inches high by* 5 *feet* 5 *inches wide.*

The Transfiguration

Fra Angelico

PLATE

Christ taking leave of His Mother

ANTONIO ALLEGRI DA CORREGGIO

Christ taking leave of His Mother

By Antonio Allegri da Correggio

The originality of the young painter of Correggio is seen both in his choice of this comparatively rare subject and in the treatment of the theme which he adopts. As Morelli was the first to point out, this panel is clearly a work of Allegri's early youth, and must have been painted before the Madonna of S. Francis, probably about the year 1513.

Christ, wearing a deep red mantle over a white robe, kneels to take leave of His Mother, before the Passover, in the presence of the beloved Disciple and of S. Mary Magdalen, who is here represented as a fair young girl with brown hair and regular features. The blue mantle worn by the Virgin, the yellow draperies of the youthful Evangelist, and the dull red-brown of the Magdalen's robe are characteristic of Allegri's early style, while the types employed recall the Veronese master, Lorenzo Costa. The picture has, unfortunately, been badly injured by repainting, but still retains much of its original charm. Both in the poetry of the landscape, heightened as it is by a lovely effect of sunlight breaking over the distant sea, and in the intense emotion visible on the faces of the Blessed Mother and of her companions, we recognise the curiously modern feeling which is so marked a feature of Correggio's art.

This picture is mentioned by Lanzi in his list of Correggio's works, and was at Milan in his lifetime. It is now the property of Mr. Robert Benson, by whose kind permission it is here reproduced, and has been recently exhibited, both at the rooms of the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1894, *and at the Winter Exhibition held by the Royal Academy in* 1896.

Size: 33½ *inches high by* 29½ *inches wide.*

Christ taking leave of His Mother

Correggio

PLATE

The Last Supper

FRA ANGELICO

The Last Supper

By Fra Angelico

The scene here represented is not, strictly speaking, the Last Supper, but the institution of the Blessed Sacrament by Christ, on the night before His Passion. Fra Angelico has departed from the common Giottesque composition, and has given us a version of the subject that is rarely seen in Italian art.

The upper chamber at Jerusalem is here modelled on the pattern of the refectory of S. Marco. The long table, three-legged wooden stools, and the well with the rope and pitcher in one corner, are all exactly reproduced, and through the narrow windows we see the red-tiled convent roof on the farther side of the cloister. Eight of the Apostles kneel at the table, while the white-robed Christ glides gently from one to the other, bearing the consecrated bread in His hands. Four others, among whom is Judas with the black nimbus round his head, kneel on the floor to the right, and opposite them, also on her knees, is the Virgin Mother, wrapped in a grey robe, with hands devoutly clasped, contemplating the institution of the mystic rite.

The solemn pathos of the scene is wonderfully given, and if, on the one hand, the defects of the painter's art are more than usually apparent in the stiffness and awkwardness of the forms, his tender feeling is never more fully displayed than in the yearning face of the beloved Disciple, who is in the act of receiving the Bread of Heaven from his Master's hands.

This fresco was painted by Fra Angelico on the wall of one of the friars' cells in the Convent of S. Marco, now a National Museum, and the upper part of the composition has been cut off by the slanting roof.

Size: 6 *feet high by* 8 *feet wide.*

The Last Supper

Fra Angelico

PLATE

Madonna. Addolorata and Ecce Homo

BERNARDINO LUINI

Madonna Addolorata and Ecce Homo

By Bernardino Luini

The Virgin is always introduced by Italian painters in representations of the Procession to Calvary. Sometimes we see her rudely repulsed by the Roman soldiers, according to an old Greek tradition, sometimes fainting in the arms of the holy women, as she follows in the way of the Cross. In other versions of the subject, she stretches out her arms in her grief to her Son, and Christ turns his compassionate gaze upon her. Here Luini, with exquisite taste and feeling, throws a veil over the horrors of the scene, and only shows us the Christ crowned with thorns and bearing his Cross on the way to Calvary, and the Virgin Mother, with arms folded on her breast, looking at Him with infinite love and pity in her eyes. The mantle of the Virgin and the tunic of Christ are of the same deep crimson hue, and the forms of the Roman soldiers and of the holy women are dimly seen in the background. The face of Christ is marked by the ideal nobleness and gentleness that distinguish this Lombard master's types, and lend a peculiar elevation and beauty to all his pictures of the Passion.

This work was probably painted soon after 1520, *and was originally in the collection of the Duca Littà. It was acquired about fifty years ago by the Cavaliere Poldi-Pezzoli, who bequeathed his pictures to the city of Milan, at his death in* 1879, *and still adorns the Museo which bears his name.*

Size of each subject: 19½ *inches high, by* 15½ *inches wide.*

Madonna Addolorata and Ecce Homo

Luini

PLATE

The Crucifixion

PIETRO PERUGINO

The Crucifixion

By Pietro Perugino

This fresco covers one whole side of the wall, in the ancient Chapter-house of the Cistercian monks at Cestello, a monastery afterwards occupied by Carmelite nuns, and known by the name of S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, from a member of the community who was canonised. Perugino received the commission for this work in 1493, *from a Florentine citizen, named Dionisio Pucci, and Giovanna his wife. The fresco was finished by the* 20*th of April,* 1496, *when the painter received the sum of fifty-five florins, which had been agreed upon.*

The Crucifixion is here represented, not as an actual event taking place before our eyes, but as a sacred mystery for the devout contemplation of Christians. The fresco is divided by pilasters into three separate compartments. In the centre, Christ hangs upon the Cross, and Magdalen, clad in a blue robe and red mantle, kneels in silent adoration at his feet. On the right, S. John, wearing a violet tunic and red mantle, turns his sorrowing gaze at his dying Lord, while S. Benedict, the patriarch of the monks of the West, in his brown habit, kneels at his side. On the left, the Blessed Mother, in a purple mantle, stands with hands tightly clasped together in her anguish, and S. Bernard, the great Saint of the Cistercian Order, kneels beside her in his white cowl.

The impressive effect of these single figures is heightened by the beauty of the wide landscape and clear expanse of evening skies. The scene of anguish and sorrow, we feel, is lifted into a serener region, and a sense of deep peace rests upon the soul.

Size of each subject: 12 *feet high, by* 6 *feet wide.*

Remerciegravure

Printed in Paris

The Crucifixion

Perugino

PLATE

The Crucifixion

TINTORETTO

The Crucifixion

By Tintoretto

This central group is taken from the great Crucifixion that covers the whole wall at one end of the Sala dell' Albergo, in the Scuola di S. Rocco. It was painted in the year 1565, *and this date, together with the master's signature, "Jacobus Tintorectus," may still be seen on a rock in the left-hand corner of the picture. The colouring is very sombre, as is the case in most of this painter's works, and the great hall where the picture hangs is so badly lighted that, except in the early morning, it is exceedingly difficult to obtain a true idea of this masterpiece of Tintoretto's "stormy brush."*

The crisis of the Agony has been reached; Christ has uttered His bitter cry; and the great darkness has fallen over all the earth. The faithful Magdalen is still standing at the foot of the Cross, and, in the foreground, the sorrowing disciples press around the fainting Virgin. A Roman soldier is in the act of placing the sponge dipped in vinegar upon the reed, and the thieves are being bound in their turn to the cross, upon which they too will be lifted up. In the background are a crowd of spectators—soldiers drawing lots for the garments; peasants from the country with their families, gazing on the scene with wonder and curiosity; some deeply moved, others intent on their own occupations and indifferent to what is passing before their eyes. The movement and animation of the scene with its varied incidents forms a striking contrast to the silent figure hanging upon the Cross. The Face is in shadow, but a white light lingers over the distant mountains and forms a glory round the head of the dying Son of Man. The workmanship of the picture is of the highest excellence, and the solemn meaning of the story is brought out with unutterable power and pathos. "I must leave this picture," writes Mr. Ruskin, "to work its will on the spectator. It is beyond all analysis and above all praise."

The Crucifixion

Tintoretto

PLATE

The Descent from the Cross

FRA ANGELICO

The Descent from the Cross

By Fra Angelico

This fine altar-piece originally adorned the sacristy of the Trinità Church, which belonged to the Vallombrosan Order, and is now in the Accademia delle belle Arti, in Florence. The short stature of the figures and the flatness of the colouring give the picture the effect of a large miniature, but we note a marked advance in the drawing and modelling of the forms. There can be little doubt that the work belongs to Fra Angelico's later years, and was painted about the year 1440 ; *that is to say, about the same time as his last frescoes in the convent of S. Marco. The introduction of Michelozzo, the architect of S. Marco, who was born in* 1396, *as a man between forty and fifty years of age, points to the same conclusion.*

The subject was well suited to the Dominican master's tender and devotional art, and there is a simple majesty and reverence about his rendering of the scene, together with a profound sense of reality which makes it unlike all other Depositions. Both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus stand on the ladder and gently and reverently lift down the lifeless body from the Cross, while the beloved disciple holds up his arms to receive the precious burden. In the blue-robed figure, seated on a step of the ladder, we recognise the portrait of Michelozzo wearing the "cappuccio nero," or black cap, mentioned by Vasari. On the right, a young disciple, wearing a similar cap, holds up the crown of thorns and nails with sorrowful gesture before the eyes of his companions, and on the left, the Blessed Mother kneels with clasped hands and gazes sorrowfully at the winding-sheet, which the holy women prepare to receive the sacred form. In front, the Magdalen, conspicuous by her long yellow hair and red robe, is seen, tenderly kissing the feet of her Lord. No violent action or excessive display of grief mars the deep repose of the dead Christ, but the words "Corona gloriæ," inscribed on the glory round his brow, tell of the victory that has been won. And with fine poetic feeling, the scene of suffering and death is surrounded with beauty. Bright winged angels float in the opened heavens, flowers of brilliant hues spring up in the grass at the foot of the Cross, tall cypresses and stone pines rise into the sky, on either side. And beyond, the eye roams over a fair and sunny landscape, with the towers and walls of Florence on the one side, and on the other, the green slopes and wooded heights of Vallombrosa.

The Gothic frame of the picture is richly carved and decorated with figures of single Saints, among whom we recognise Dominic and Giovanni Gualberto, the founders of the Dominican and Vallombrosan Orders, and small paintings of the Resurrection, said to be the work of the Camaldolese monk, Lorenzo Monaco, adorn the pinnacles.

Size: 9 *feet* 4 *inches high, by* 9 *feet* 7 *inches wide.*

The Descente from the Cross
Fra Angelico

PLATE

Pietà

GIOVANNI BELLINI

Pietà

By Giovanni Bellini

This Pietà is one of the Venetian master's earliest renderings of a subject which he often repeated in later years, and was probably painted about 1465. *The long angular types, the pale colouring and general character of the landscape, all recall the style of his father Jacopo Bellini, while the metallic sharpness with which each separate hair is painted, reminds us of Mantegna's work. After being, during many years, in the Zampieri collection at Bologna, it was presented to the city of Milan, in* 1811, *by Eugène Beauharnais, then Viceroy of Italy, and is now in the Brera Gallery.*

As in Mantegna's famous "Cristo in Scurto," which is now in the same collection, the Virgin is represented as an aged and wrinkled woman, wearing a black mantle, and the figure of the beloved disciple, turning aside with parted lips and streaming eyes, bears a marked likeness to the S. John of the great Paduan's famous Entombment. But there is less grimace in his expression, and more restraint in the violence of his grief, while the tenderness of the embrace with which the sorrowing Mother presses her cheek against the dead face of her Son has never been represented in a manner at once so true and so pathetic. In the words of the Latin distich, that is inscribed on the white marble parapet, "The eyes seem to utter groans, the figures weep as it were of themselves."

"Haec fere quum gemitus turgentia lumina promant,
Bellini poterit flere Joannes Opus."

Size: 33 *inches high, by* 42 *inches wide.*

Pieta

Bellini

PLATE

Pietà

FRANCESCO FRANCIA

Pietà

By Francesco Francia

This lunette was originally attached to the picture of the Madonna and Child with S. Anna enthroned, and attendant Saints below, which is also in the National Gallery. Both panels once formed part of an altar-piece painted by Francia about the year 1500, *for the Buonvisi Chapel, in the church of S. Frediano of Lucca. In the following century the work was removed to the Ducal Palace and was brought to England in* 1840, *with the rest of the Duke of Lucca's collection. In the following year it was purchased for the National Gallery.*

No picture is more popular, or has ever been more frequently copied and reproduced, than Francia's Pietà. This is due not only to the richness of the colouring, and admirable balance of the composition, but to the purity and tenderness of the feeling which the goldsmith-painter here reveals. The dead Christ rests in the deep sleep of death on His Mother's knees, but, instead of the usual Saints, Mary has for attendants two bright-haired angels, robed in red, one of whom reverently supports the head while the other folds his hands in silent worship at the feet of the Saviour of the world. The stricken Mother, whose eyes are red with weeping and whose heart has been pierced by many sorrows, cannot see the heavenly visitants, but we see them and realise all the meaning of a presence that transforms the saddest of all scenes into a divine mystery full of hope and love.

Size: 3 *feet* 2 *inches high, by* 6 *feet wide.*

Pietà

Francia

PLATE

The Entombment

TITIAN

The Entombment

By Titian

This great picture, which is one of the chief treasures of the Salon Carré, in the Louvre, was painted by Titian soon after 1522, *for Federigo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, the son of Isabella d'Este, who visited Venice about this time and gave the painter several commissions. It is mentioned in a Mantuan inventory of* 1527, *soon after which it was sold to Charles the First, and a few years later we find it described as "a Mantuan piece, hanging in the first privy lodging at Whitehall." At the sale of the King's pictures, under the Commonwealth, this masterpiece was valued at the very low price of £*120, *and bought by the banker Jabach, who sold it for the same amount to Louis XIV.*

Both in grouping and colouring this composition is an example of Titian's finest qualities. The winding-sheet in which the dead body of Christ is laid is held up by Nicodemus, who is here represented as a middle-aged man wearing a red tunic, and Joseph of Arimathea, a bearded figure in dark green. On the left, Mary Magdalen, clad in a yellow robe, with her long hair flowing on the breeze, tenderly supports the desolate Mother, who, wrapped in the folds of a long blue mantle, gazes mournfully on the dead face of her Son. The influence which Giorgione still exercised on his friend and assistant is evident in the fine head and ardent expression of the youthful S. John, who looks round compassionately at the bereaved Mother, as well as in the red sunset gleam that lights up the stormy sky and deepens the solemn pathos of the scene.

Size: 1 *m.* 48 *cent. high, by* 2 *m.* 15 *cent. wide.*

The Entombment

Titian

PLATE

The Resurrection

FRA ANGELICO

The Resurrection

By Fra Angelico

In this fresco, which belongs to the series in the cells of S. Marco, Fra Angelico has skilfully combined two separate versions of the Resurrection that were equally common in early Christian art. In the one we see the Risen Lord soaring upwards, bearing the flag of victory in his hand, while the sleeping guards lie prostrate on the ground or else start up in terror at the sight. In the other, the Maries or the Apostles are seen bending over the empty tomb, vainly seeking for the body of their Lord. Both of these subjects are here brought together.

In the foreground, the Magdalen and the Blessed Virgin with their companions, bearing offerings of sweet spices in their hands, press eagerly round the empty tomb and look in vain for the body of their Lord, all unconscious of the white-robed angel who is sitting calmly on the stone, pointing heavenward with uplifted finger as he speaks the word, "He is not here, He is risen." Above, dimly seen in the blaze of glory that streams from His risen body, the Christ appears, holding the palm of victory in one hand, and the red-cross banner in the other, as He soars upward on the clouds of heaven.

As in the fresco of the Transfiguration, the half-length figure of the Christ considerably exceeds that of the others in stature. In the left-hand corner, S. Domine, with the star set in the halo round his brow and the black cowl tightly drawn over his head, kneels in humble adoration of this great Christian mystery.

Size: 5 feet 6 inches high, by 5 feet 2 inches wide.

Printed in Paris

The Resurrection

Fra Angelico

PLATE

The Ascension

GIOTTO

The Ascension

By Giotto

Giotto's fresco of the Ascension is one of the finest and most striking of the thirty-eight scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin which he painted in the Arena Chapel at Padua. The text of the Gospel story is closely followed, but the conception is full of power and originality. Instead of adopting the traditional composition of the Ascending Christ blessing His disciples as the cloud receives Him out of their sight, the painter has represented Him, seen in profile, with upturned face and outstretched arms, as it were, borne upwards by the supreme force of love. On either side, choirs of the blessed, hovering in mid-air, wait to hail their Lord, and patriarchs and virgins rejoice in His triumph as He enters the gates of heaven. On the mount below, the Apostles kneel in pairs, watching their ascending Master with straining eyes and wistful hearts, while two white-robed angels are seen pointing upwards as they repeat the words of the celestial message: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." And there, kneeling on the ground in front of the beloved disciple, is the Virgin Mother, a noble and touching figure, with a beautiful expression of faith and love on her face, intently watching the departing form of her Son, as He vanishes out of her sight.

Printed in Paris

The Ascension

Giotto

PLATE

The Ascension

PIETRO PERUGINO

The Ascension

By Pietro Perugino

This Ascension originally formed the central panel of the great altar-piece which Perugino painted for the basilica of S. Pietro, without the gates of Perugia. He signed the contract with the monks of the convent to which the church was attached, on the 8th of March, 1496, when he paid a short visit to Perugia, but does not seem to have commenced the work until his return from Florence, three years later. The altar-piece was broken up at the time of the French invasion, when the central panel was taken to Paris, and finally given by Pope Pius VII. to the city of Lyons. Of the remaining portions, five panels of single Saints are now in the Vatican Gallery, three others are in the Sacristy of S. Pietro at Perugia, and a lunette of the Pietà is preserved in the church of S. Germain l'Auxerrois, in Paris. The predella, consisting of three separate pictures, representing the Adoration of the Magi, Baptism and Resurrection, is now at Rouen.

The Ascension which adorns the Museum of Lyons was transferred from panel to canvas after its removal to France, and has suffered considerably in the process, but the colouring still retains much of its original lustre and delicacy.

Perugino, after his wont, adopts the conventional type, and represents Christ floating on the clouds, surrounded by a "mandorla" of cherub-heads, and pointing upwards as if to say: "I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." A troop of bright-haired angels with rippling locks and fluttering ribands hover in the air beside Him. Four are playing musical instruments, two others point heavenwards, and bear open scrolls inscribed with the words, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"

On the ground below, the Virgin, draped in a rich blue robe, stands with clasped hands and upturned eyes, watching her Son's Ascension. Around her are the twelve Apostles. S. Peter lifts his hand to shade his eyes from the dazzling light. In the opposite group, S. James looks quietly out of the picture, holding a book in one hand and the sword of martyrdom in the other. S. John, a beautiful youth, in a green robe, with wavy locks, stands with hands folded on his breast, gazing earnestly after his ascending Lord. The rigid symmetry of the composition, and a certain mannerism in the faces and attitudes of the figures, betray some loss of freshness and decay of inspiration, but the colour is as soft and lovely as ever, and the wide spaces of sky and landscape, the green valleys and gleaming waters of the distance, have all Perugino's old charm.

Size: 3 m. 42 cent. high, by 2 m. 63 cent. wide.

The Ascension

Perugino

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Digitized with financial assistance from
Observer Research Foundation
on 22 February, 2019